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GAUNTLET.

BY LORD GORELL.

CHAPTER XXX.

CECILIA did not hurry back to Darlingby. She stayed sitting on the log in the wood, turning over in her mind all that had befallen her, until she was reminded by a premonitory shiver that she was in danger of catching cold. That brought back to her with a rush the almost obliterated misery of her last evening with the Laskers : till then she had remained divided between laughter and tears, but at that recollection she was splashed through and through by a wave of thankfulness. She sprang up and regained warmth fully by an energetic search for primroses, not yet in fragrant abundance but star-scattered through the wood, and the picking of a small bunch : and then sauntered by a circuitous route home to Darlingby, stopping often, her whole being in a curious maze, tended by the peaceful music of the birds' songs and the quick oncoming of the dusk.

She went down to dinner prepared to cope evasively with the questions she would probably be asked as to Glissondale Falls, but beyond a hope that she was not too tired with her walk and had enjoyed her day, Lady Wraybourne made no reference to her absence. She smelt the primroses with which Cecilia had presented her with great satisfaction, remarking, 'Delicious things. They're early for up here, but it's been an exceptionally mild spring, and I keep forgetting how Time's moving on.'

'Very fast,' sighed Cecilia : she did not like to remind Lady Wraybourne of her promise to find her another place ; the necessity made her heart sink.

'Felicity was asking to-day,' went on Lady Wraybourne, 'if she couldn't have a picking expedition : that child adores flowers.'

'And has an astonishing zest for any novelty.'

'I think we might gratify this ; what d'you think ? If it's fine to-morrow, I'll take you all in the car to a sheltered spot I know, where there are sure to be primroses out.'

Cecilia assented gladly : she had been all too little, she felt,

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in Lady Wraybourne's company, and soon she would see her no more. She knew she ought to be taking steps herself as to a new situation, but could not mentally face up to her departure as an actuality of the near future.

The next day was obligingly one of the warmest, most windless days the year had yet brought forth. From the way the children behaved on being first told of the little plan, a stranger might have surmised that a trip at least to Mars was projected: they flew about rapturously, chattering like starlings; every detail, all possibilities were canvassed, debated, arranged, and rearranged several scores of times before, after an early lunch, they set out. Cecilia, watching the way intently, noted with mixed feelings that they soon turned off from the road to Hartley Harland.

'That's the wood,' said Lady Wraybourne, pointing ahead to a sheltered corner of the valley through which they were passing after they had gone several miles. 'That's always the earliest place.'

'There's some one there,' said Cecilia, disappointed.

'Car!' cried Danny, wriggling on her knee and pointing.

'That'll only be John Harland,' explained Lady Wraybourne. 'He's seen very little of the children really, so I suggested his joining us if he cared to and he said he'd be delighted.'

'Hardly an ordinary man's afternoon,' murmured Cecilia, her heart pounding so wildly that she felt she must say something to cover her tumult.

'No, but John's not an ordinary man, and if he gets bored he can always talk to me.'

John Harland was sitting in a two-seater drawn up by the side of the road in front of a gate opening on to a grass path up the wood. He waved cheerily to them as they approached, swept Cecilia with a half-defiant smile, and then, jumping out, lifted the ecstatic Danny from her arms and set him down on the road. Then he caught Felicity just as she was stumbling in her hurrying excitement, swung her out, and, turning, gave an arm to Lady Wraybourne.

'Capital!' he cried. 'Baskets, wool, sunshine, and smiles—anything wanting?'

Cecilia, hardly knowing whether to respond or be silent, so swiftly had the character of the afternoon's outing been transformed, sprang out and, in self-defence, followed the laughing, calling children into the wood. Her face was on fire: the sooner

she gave a natural reason for her colour by stooping over primroses the better.

‘Luminous with love
In tranquil clusters, breathing fragrance forth
Throughout the woodland, lighting up the gloom
Of the leaf-sodden pathways,’

the exquisite little flowers were shyly stealing out to reward the zealous seeker. John stayed, Cecilia noted as she ran ahead with the children, to help Lady Wraybourne who came limping stoutly along. But presently Cecilia heard the old lady bid him ignore her: she could manage, she declared. Felicity called imperiously to him to come and help her and, with a second half-defiant smile at Cecilia, he obeyed.

Cecilia did not mind: he was near her and that was enough for her happiness, as much as was ever to be hers. And conversation was in any event impossible. Felicity, though a picker, was not content for a moment to pick in unadmired silence: some one was needed every second either to reach her a special flower awkwardly growing near bramble or nettle or to respond to her eager, ‘Look what I’ve found!’ Danny considered picking flowers a very inferior sport, suitable only for girls and grown-ups.

‘I’m a big boy, aren’t I?’ he declared, clambering over a bit of broken branch.

‘If you’re a big boy, what am I?’ asked John laughing.

‘You’re a big boy too,’ admitted Danny. ‘Those lilies,’ he added, waving a fat hand towards Cecilia and Felicity, ‘are only little girls.’

‘Quite right,’ assented John heartily.

‘They’re just chujunes,’ explained Danny condescendingly.

‘That’s beyond me,’ remarked John; ‘a wonderful word.’

‘Children, of course,’ interpreted Cecilia, speaking with a gaiety that surprised herself. The whole scene was going to her head: she felt as though in another moment she must break, like the birds, into song.

‘Children?’ queried John. ‘Good: Danny, you’re right again.’

‘Danny’s a very silly little boy,’ called Felicity severely: she did not at all approve either of Danny’s condescension or of the praise that he was undeservedly receiving for it.

Praise or blame, it was all one to Danny. His mind, sufficient

unto itself, had passed beyond words to something much more interesting. In front of him, at the side of the path and free of the brambles that irked his manhood, was a section of the trunk of a tree, cut but not yet removed by the woodmen. To this Lady Wraybourne was stubbornly making her way, and for once age and youth agreed: it was also the goal of Danny's desire. He was at it first and with great puffings and struggles climbed up on to it and then scrambled erect.

'I couldn't fall, could I?' he announced, tottering dangerously.

'Very easily, I imagine,' answered John.

'He's an awful tease, isn't he?' remarked Lady Wraybourne, directing her words at Felicity.

'He's a good tease,' was Felicity's unexpected reply.

'I love 'Cilia, don't I?' called Danny irrelevantly, dancing on the tree.

'We all do,' said Lady Wraybourne.

'D'you love 'Cilia?' immediately enquired Felicity of John.

'Of course I love 'Cilia, don't I?' he responded without an instant's hesitation, making his tone a remarkable exact imitation of Danny's slow, fat, satisfied voice.

Cecilia knew that her colour was sweeping again in an inconvenient flow to her cheeks, but she shot him a glance nonetheless: she felt that at whatever cost of embarrassment to herself she must know whether he were all mockery or in any degree, however slight, touched with sincerity. But he met her glance so squarely that he conceded nothing: she was forced back to her picking, still tingling in every nerve with the thrill of uncertainty, yet telling herself that it was utterly impossible that he could have so spoken in sheer malicious unkindness.

'I wonder you care to spend your time like this,' she said when the chances of picking brought them once for a short space alone together.

'Do you?' he queried instantly with a keen look at her averted face. 'To me an afternoon like this is a direct proof of the existence of God.'

'Oh!' she cried, all her being stirred by such an answer: her breath came and went unevenly and she did not dare look up.

The next moment he had taken from his answer all personal application. 'Yes,' he went on lightly,

"Who but a God would mould the tiny flower
To its mere beauty?"

as one of our poets asks.' To this she had no reply and, the children calling each severally and insistently, the conversation died.

Presently all the baskets were filling up and the children were growing tired: by mutual consent the pickers gathered by Lady Wraybourne sitting on the tree-trunk.

'Tell me a 'tawly,' began Danny to his world at large.

'Sing me a song,' demanded Felicity, always contrary on principle.

'Your show,' said John to Cecilia, keeping Danny from falling backwards and squeezing down in friendly fashion beside her.

Once more her undisciplined heart began to thump: she took refuge in obedience and began a nursery favourite:

'Cows and horses walk on four legs:
Little children walk on two legs:
Birds fly up into the air:
Fishes swim in the water clear.
One, two, three, four, five,
Once I caught a fish alive:
Why did you let it go?—'

'Why, indeed?' interrupted John.

"Because it bit my finger so," chanted Felicity, continuing the song in answer.

'Or because I bit it?' he asked.

But Felicity at once made his ignorance plain. 'That doesn't make sense,' she said with decisive superiority.

'Perhaps not. Any way, a good song,' he then admitted, and there was an odd little quaver in his voice as though Cecilia's clear, young notes or some chord of memory had proved unexpectedly moving. He darted a look at her that was more suggestive of feeling than any he had yet allowed himself, and added, 'My favourite is this; it has such a jolly sort of invitation in it somehow:

"Warm, hands, warm;
The men have gone to plough:
If you want to warm your hands,
Warm your hands now!"'

'There isn't always a fire,' said Felicity firmly, with the unexpected matter-of-factness of a child.

'That's true,' agreed Cecilia.

'We could always pretend there was, though,' added Felicity with brightness.

'Pretence ones aren't very warm,' said Cecilia sadly: her heart seemed to her to be in her throat, fluttering like a frightened bird in a chimney. To be so close to him, and yet so far away, was undermining all her self-control; and to screen her weakness her voice was cold.

'That is so, of course,' John agreed with great politeness, and rose at once from his seat beside her on the trunk.

She got up too, and looked at him. She could not speak; she had said too much already and, if he were so quick to take her words wrongly, could she help it? She had spoken out of the essential loneliness of her life, and he had thought himself snubbed. Their eyes met, but he also did not speak. He searched her with his glance intently, and then very quietly turned to Lady Wraybourne.

'Time I was moving,' he said.

'Have you picked enough?' she asked.

'One never does that,' he answered.

'Tea time!' shouted Danny, sliding off the trunk with an ominous sound suggestive of serious injury to his knickers.

'I simply must get one more teeny bunch!' cried Felicity, darting at an isolated primrose as a thrush darts at a worm.

Cecilia glanced around her: for a moment or two she was quite alone with John. The opportunity she had sought was hers; she would be lacking in courage and in candour if she failed to take it. She spoke hurriedly with rising colour and eyes on the ground. 'John—there's one thing I want to say to you.'

She stopped, but he gave no sign of wanting to prevent her continuing: she regained strength and went on,

'I know now what I ought to have known always, that I was wrong in thinking that that woman—you know who I mean?—'

He nodded, lips pressed together.

'—was referring to you. I'm sorry.'

'Thank you,' he answered.

'I feel I was pretty hasty—and selfish,' she added diffidently.

'That's all right,' he replied with great cheerfulness, and was silent.

She waited for him to say something more: as he did not, silence gathered heavily upon her also. She lifted her eyes and the next instant, dropping her basket, she started forward with a cry and ran as she had never run in her life. They were near the gate out of the wood on to the road: they had left that open, the

two cars drawn up a few yards to one side. Danny, forgotten by the grown-ups and ignored by Felicity, had gone gambolling ahead down the path: he was now tripping gaily through the gate, and, travelling up the road at a great pace towards him, was a big touring car. Danny was screened from the driver's view by the waiting cars, and to Cecilia, in a swift agony of anticipation, a horrible accident seemed inevitable. She swooped forward on wings of terror, and tearing down the little slope caught Danny in her arms as he capered out on to the edge of the road and, unable to check her impetus, did the only thing possible and sprang with all her strength onwards and across in front of the big, fast-travelling car. The driver of that with a shout and a sudden wrenching of his wheel just succeeded in turning in enough to let her pass, then, seeing that she and her charge were all right, waved a hand with the cheerfulness of his race, put on more pace to avoid all questions, and disappeared.

Cecilia had had no time to estimate what had happened or to realize that both she and Danny were uninjured when a tense, white-faced John was upon her.

'Good God!' he cried. 'You might have been killed!'

'Well?' she flamed at him with sudden passion.

'Well?' he repeated, staring at her strangely.

'I thought Danny was——'

'Danny was all right,' he broke in with curtness: 'the driver could have missed him easily; he had all his work cut out to miss you!'

'He was clever,' she answered with a trembling lip. 'No one else much misses me.'

He looked at her a moment steadily without answering: then he said very quietly, 'I wouldn't go quite so far as that.'

'You would! You have—quite as far!' she cried.

'We jumped 'cross the road, didn't we?' called Danny in his fattest and most satisfied voice to Felicity and Lady Wraybourne who had now reached the gate.

'A happy ending to a jolly afternoon,' John remarked, turning to Lady Wraybourne. 'A gallant rescue and no harm done.' He briefly described the incident.

'My dear,' said Lady Wraybourne with real affection, 'you'll make my hair white.'

'It is white, Grannibel,' volunteered Felicity cheerfully.

Lady Wraybourne laughed, gave Cecilia her hand, and aban-

doned sentiment. 'You'll come back to tea, John?' she asked, as she settled in her seat and the children clambered, talkatively, in.

'I think not, thanks. Sufficient for the day, you know. I've several things to see to if I'm to get off to-morrow.'

'To-morrow?' asked Lady Wraybourne, as Cecilia, about to get in beside her, stood stricken suddenly into immobility.

'Yes. I've finished up here now.'

'Well, we'll be seeing you again before long.'

'Certainly: I won't say "good-bye."'

'Good-guy!' shouted Danny with the utmost cheerfulness.

Cecilia, her limbs leaden and her cheeks drained of colour, lifted herself somehow into the car. Fraser's shutting of the door sounded in her ears like the closing of the gates of heaven: she sank back, too spent in spirit even to take one last look at her husband and, gathering Danny in her arms, buried her face passionately against his shoulder. She did not know what she had hoped, but she knew that, whatever her hope had been, it, like her life, was vain.

CHAPTER XXXI.

CECILIA was removing the top of Danny's egg for him at breakfast on the following morning when Lady Wraybourne appeared in her dressing-gown at the door of the day-nursery. This was so unprecedented that, whilst the children shrilly called characteristic greetings and information to their Grannibel, Cecilia rose from her seat in sharp surprise.

'I didn't want to bother you with it last night,' said Lady Wraybourne, nodding to Felicity and Danny and smiling at Cecilia, 'but I've got to go to London for a couple of days or so, and I think it would be a good thing to take the children with me.'

Every sort of wild surmise flashed through Cecilia's mind; she said nothing, looking enquiringly at Lady Wraybourne.

'Take me to-morrow!' sang Danny.

'Off to London!' cried Felicity, enraptured.

'Be quiet, babies: I can't hear myself speak,' said Lady Wraybourne, laughing in spite of herself. 'You make me wonder how I'll manage.'

'D'you mean,' asked Cecilia, struck with sudden dismay, 'without me?'

'Yes. I'm taking Agnes, and I'll have MacDougall, of course.

I shan't be gone more than a few days and the children must obviously get used to being without you.'

It was said with kindness, but also with decision. Cecilia felt the words sink into her, like heavy stones dropped into a pool.

'I'm a person people do get used to being without,' she said slowly.

'My dear,' exclaimed Lady Wraybourne with energy, 'you and the two children talk more nonsense than any three people I know! Don't be so ridiculous. It isn't a lasting separation, and there's nothing whatever to be depressed about. Quite the reverse. You ought to welcome a bit of holiday: you deserve it, any way.'

'I'll try,' answered Cecilia, ashamed of her weakness.

'Good. Have them ready by eleven-forty-five: that'll give us plenty of time.'

Lady Wraybourne shook her head at Felicity who was stretching out a stealthy hand to the sugar-basin and limped energetically away. Cecilia sat a moment motionless amongst the clamour of the excited children: it was a sudden blow that she had received, robbing her of company just when she least wished to be left alone with her reflections. But her state of mind could not be helped by submission to distress; spirited resistance was needed. She roused herself resolutely and before breakfast was ended had even forced a smile.

She then fell upon the necessary packing, glad to have something so practical to do and welcoming the continual conversation made obligatory by the children whose ideas of assistance were based solely upon enthusiasm and defied all logic. Notwithstanding them, she was ready with the preparations and in the hall with both children and luggage by eleven-forty-five. As she stood a moment, watching the luggage being fastened by Fraser on to the car, a chance gesture of his, a trick he had of settling his cap firmly on his head with both hands, recalled vividly her similar moment waiting by the car for Lady Wraybourne at the hotel door the morning of the day she had first come to Darlingby. Little indeed had she known what lay before her, joy and pain both to an exquisite degree!

Lady Wraybourne, followed by her own maid, MacDougall, and an extremely nervous Agnes, descended to cut short further waiting. A few moments' energetic packing in followed, and all were ready to leave Cecilia, the children far too excited by the adventure to have a thought to spare for anything except the journey.

'We're going in a puffa, aren't we?' cried Danny vainly and gloriously.

'All the way to London!' shouted Felicity.

'By the way,' said Lady Wraybourne, leaning forward, 'there's one thing you might do for me if you will, Cecilia. That top left-hand little drawer of my writing-desk is in an awful muddle: I wish you'd go through it for me and sort it out, will you? Do what you like with anything that seems done with: I know I can leave it to you.'

'Very well, Lady Wraybourne,' Cecilia assented, glad that there was anything in the world, however trivial, that she was still needed by anybody to do.

'All right, Fraser.' Lady Wraybourne nodded to Cecilia with great kindness, the children screamed their farewells, the car started. Cecilia, her eyes misting in spite of all her resolution, was alone except for the butler, who sighed heavily with the air of a Lord Chancellor surrendering the Great Seal. Hatless, without occupation, she ran into the garden and roamed it disconsolately until it was time to eat an unaccompanied meal.

Luncheon over, the afternoon stretched, long and cheerless, before her: to assimilate itself the weather turned unexpectedly to drizzle. Cecilia drifted to the window, and then, remembering Lady Wraybourne's parting request, decided that there could be no more fitting time for its performance: she went down forthwith to Lady Wraybourne's boudoir. This was a small, white-panelled room off the main stairs and facing south. On fine days it was a sun-trap, a most appropriate setting, Cecilia had often thought, for an old lady who was always gay. On this afternoon there were no sunbeams: the rain was pattering drearily on the window and the room seemed cold and lacking in life. Cecilia had never been in it before alone, and she looked round it now with curiosity. On a small side-table stood some photographs: she had instantly noticed one of John the first visit she had paid Lady Wraybourne there. Now she was able to step across and gaze at it. A young John, years before he had entered her life, in uniform as a 2nd Lieutenant, taken obviously in the early days of the war: he had risen, she knew, to be a captain, twice slightly wounded, and had won a Military Cross. Long ago all that was, childhood days to her: and now he looked out of the frame at her smilingly. How much he had been through of which she had hardly even read! The knowledge of that was what had led her judgment so astray.

Now the young face, so like the John she loved and yet so subtly unlike, gave her a sense of anguish quite unreasonable. And beside him stood an older photograph of a lady unmistakably his mother, a face full of sweetness as well as of strength, that might have had so much meaning for Cecilia. How strange, how painful human relationships were! But it was no use spending time so. Cecilia turned from the photographs and drawing up Lady Wraybourne's own chair, sat down in front of the walnut writing-desk, set at an angle beside the big window, and opened the top left-hand little drawer, intending to make a thorough job of the sorting and hoping that it would occupy her all the afternoon.

When the contents of the drawer lay revealed, she stared at them doubtfully. Her memory of Lady Wraybourne's words was exact; she was quite certain she had opened the drawer that had been specified, but surely there was some mistake? Lady Wraybourne had said it was 'in an awful muddle': it was in nothing of the kind. It contained no more than a small packet of letters, fastened together with an elastic band, lying face downwards. Had Lady Wraybourne, in the fluster of departure, named the wrong drawer? That was possible, but would have been very unlike her exact and decisive mind. Without touching the packet, Cecilia tried the top right-hand little drawer, and then all the others—in each case the result was the same: all were locked. Intrigued and relieved of all fear of unauthorized intrusion, Cecilia took out the packet of letters and turned them over. Her heart gave a violent jump; they were four letters to Lady Wraybourne written by John: his handwriting cried vehemently aloud. But, more, they were letters that Lady Wraybourne now intended her to read. How? Why? Like an arrow revelation came: Lady Wraybourne knew!

Trembling uncontrollably, Cecilia slipped the elastic and drew out the first letter. It was dated November 21, a fortnight after her marriage and flight, and was written ill, in a very hasty hand.

'DEAREST "AUNT SALLY," it ran, "she's lost and I'm in despair. First steps were easy: a signalman had seen some one on the line that was obviously her, which gave us the certainty, and after that it was only a question of following that sable coat of hers. They couldn't go wrong: they tracked her to a farm not far off and from there to Leomouth. There she got clothes—she'd money given her by Aunt Emily at the last minute, fivers, and these of course they could follow one by one. But now they've stopped and she's dis-

appeared. They've lost her, all traces of her. What in the world am I to do? I stuck various lying notices in different papers that'll keep people quiet: but it's hell! If you've any sort of brain-wave, for God's sake send it along! Yours always,

'JOHN.'

As Cecilia's eyes devoured the hurried sentences, her breath came and went volcanically: over her memory rushed the pitiable unhappiness and straits of her first few days of flight; over her imagination poured the vision of a distracted husband. Mechanically she opened the second letter, dated December 29, equally short, equally ill-written:

'DEAREST A. S.,—You're a genius! That photo of me at Accra's done it. This morning I've got back the coat, together with the emerald, and a note, saying she simply couldn't keep them now. That doesn't matter: I've got the town she's in from the post-mark and if they can't get on to her track now they're worse than useless. Mayn't I go myself? Not if you advise against it. Oh, I'm so relieved. She's put me in the devil's own mess, but I've become a marvellous liar with practice, and any way, who cares? Thank heaven, she's as good as found. What next, most trusty counsellor? Yours,

'JOHN.'

Cecilia read, feeling as though the room were whirling round her. All sorts of memories, upon which she had never dwelt in her concentration on her husband, became suddenly plain to her. Lady Wraybourne knew, Lady Wraybourne had always known: she had inserted the Accra photograph; she had been the arch-conspirator all through. No wonder she had shown no curiosity, she who was normally so insistent upon full understanding, when Cecilia after declaring she could not be bored at Darlingby and would be little likely to leave it of her own accord, shortly afterwards gave notice. No wonder she had insisted on Cecilia's dining downstairs that first evening of his return: no wonder—oh, what floods of thoughts, surmises, and hopes filled all of a sudden Cecilia's beating brain.

The third letter was dated the day after her arrival at Darlingby and was very short.

'DARLING A. S.,—Whatever you say, I don't see how I can keep away, but I'll be guided by you. Thank God, she's safe and in the kindest hands in the world. Yours,

'JOHN.'

There was only one other, a note even more brief than the last.

'DARLING A. S.,—Hurrah! If she's seen Hartley Harland, I must turn up p.d.q. Look out for me, bless you, and the devil take his own! 'J.'

'Oh, Lady Wraybourne, Lady Wraybourne!' Cecilia exclaimed aloud to the room which seemed for all its silence to vibrate with the presence of its vivid owner, 'I might have guessed!'

She caught up the four letters and kissed them. They were hers, though not written to her. 'Do what you like with anything that seems done with,' Lady Wraybourne had said: how like her, even then to give no hint! Cecilia recalled Lady Wraybourne's sudden anxiety when she thought for a moment Cecilia had unexpectedly run into John at Hartley Harland, her relief when she found it was not so and her telling her not to come down but go early to bed that night. She recalled too Lady Wraybourne's quiet request to her to get Danny's bricks when the world was rocking dizzily round her as she first faced John, and, most of all, she recalled how after John's appearance Lady Wraybourne had invited her confidence: 'Something's upset you: won't you tell me?' Almost she had given her her confidence then: as she had not, Lady Wraybourne in her delicacy had never once forced it. What she had done instead was tell the truth about John, not to her, but for her, first saying in her hearing that he was still 'terribly in love.'

Yes, Lady Wraybourne had been the soul of kindness, she had done all that was possible. It was not her fault that all her efforts had ended in failure. In spite of them all John had been unwilling to stay: he had had his apology and his only response was to say that 'he had finished up here' and was off. Not dear Lady Wraybourne's fault, her own. She believed John loved her, in a fashion, but not enough to forgive her. He had rehabilitated himself; that had been his object, and he had achieved it. But his pride had been fatally wounded: for that injury she was for ever doomed.

How long Cecilia sat crumpled up in Lady Wraybourne's chair in front of the desk she did not know. She was dimly conscious that she had been sitting there a long time when she heard the wheels of a car crunching the drive beneath the window. The sound so coincided with the fading rainbow of her hopes that she sprang up as though she were an automaton the secret lever of whose mechanism had been pressed. She looked out, and then tears

blinded her. Below was Fraser, just returned from taking Lady Wraybourne and the children as far as York. She knew she had expected nothing different, and yet she was stabbed through with disappointment.

Listlessly she sat down again, but she had scarcely gathered to herself the blackness of desolation when the butler peered in. Seeing her, he coughed slightly to announce himself and then came forward.

'Her ladyship has sent this letter back for you by Fraser, miss,' he said, handing it to her.

'Forgotten something, no doubt,' murmured Cecilia. 'Thank you.' She opened the envelope and read:—

'MY DEAR,—Terribly sorry to bother you, but could you possibly do an errand of mercy for me? I've just remembered, I promised I'd run over and see old Mrs. Granville this afternoon: she's too paralysed to write and she's something she wants to tell me. Do go and see what it is she wants. Fraser'll take you over, of course. Many apologies.

'SARAH ISABEL WRAYBOURNE.'

'Fraser is waiting, miss,' explained the butler.

'Tell him I won't be a minute,' said Cecilia. She was glad to be used: the mission would fill up her solitary hours better than she could fill them for herself. She closed the drawer, thrust the four precious letters into her dress, ran upstairs and, putting on her little hat and her coat, never smart and now tending to be shabby, joined Fraser at the front door. Fraser was always most friendly: he nodded to her now, she thought, with an increase of friendliness that caused her momentarily to wonder if he had been told her secret, but she was sure Lady Wraybourne would never add to its keepers needlessly. He had evidently had his orders and started off as soon as she climbed in.

It was all one to her where she went. She did not remember old Mrs. Granville, but Lady Wraybourne had never taken her on visits to friends—for reasons now obvious—and she was incurious. She lay back in the comfortable seat and idly watched the country. Soon they left the wooded dells amongst which Darlingby nestled and Hartley Harland reigned, and were out upon the great, wide moors, bleak and forbidding under the lowering clouds.

There is a satisfaction even in sorrow when Nature is sympathetic: Cecilia felt the driving scud of the rain against the windows as the car climbed in open spaces to be a very restful

sound : however uninviting the aspect of the sparse landscape, it could not be out of harmony with her. She remained in unwelcome reverie, not questioning but accepting, and took no special note either of the time or the way. It was not until the car began to descend and then to pass off the moorland to richer and gentler country that she had any realization that the journey had lasted a long time. When she did understand that, it possessed no importance. Fraser evidently knew where he was going, and Time was leaden on her hands : the longer the run the less daylight she would have to throw somehow behind her.

When, however, the daylight was beginning to die and still Fraser held on his way, Cecilia was sufficiently interested to lean forward and, putting back the front glass, ask him about it. He told her so casually they were nearly there that there was nothing further for her to question.

At last, when she was growing cold and beginning to feel conscious that a very long time had elapsed since lunch, Fraser turned the car off the main road along which they had been travelling and took first to a secondary road and then to one that had never had ambitions : a lane it had been and a lane it was proud to continue to be. In the chilly and wind-swept dusk it gained in favour by its lowliness : it was flanked on either side by pines, and they gave music, scent, and shelter. Between them the quiet air had an aromatic gift to bestow, and their sighing had a soft persuasiveness, a calling to the stranger to grieve, if need be, but at all events to grieve melodiously.

Presently out of the gloom of the lane the car ran into the afterglow of the western sky and into silence. Fields stretched their peace on either side, and then a gateway, closed across the lane, arrested their progress. Fraser jumped out, set this open, and, returning, drove on before Cecilia had realized the obstacle. The car was now on a pathway through grassland and in another moment, round the corner of a small clump of pines, the lights of a house twinkled. Fraser drew up at the porch of this, and Cecilia, looking out, saw that it was small, more than a cottage but only a little more, a dwelling suited to a modest income and to a lover of peace. It struck her as isolated to an unusual degree : she had seen no other habitation for some time, and, remembering that Lady Wraybourne had written that Mrs. Granville was paralysed, she thought it must be a hard necessity that chained an invalid to it.

She had, however, little time for such reflection. Fraser,

ordinarily rather slow of movement, again proved unusually active—he must be cold and eager to be starting back again, she thought: he was out of his seat and ringing the bell almost before she appreciated that she had arrived. The door was opened, but only a few inches, and a short colloquy took place. ‘Perhaps she’s not well enough to see me and I’ve had the run for nothing,’ thought Cecilia. But Fraser returned, grinning.

‘They don’t have many visitors here, miss,’ he explained; ‘but it’s all right. Straight up the stairs, and it’s the first door on the left at the top of them. You can go right up, she says.’

‘Is Mrs. Granville expecting me?’ asked Cecilia dubiously.

‘I wouldn’t like to say,’ replied Fraser; ‘but it’s all right: I asked.’

‘Very well,’ said Cecilia, getting out. ‘I won’t be long. It’s much later than I thought.’

‘Be as long as ever you want to, miss,’ rejoined Fraser, with a very friendly air, climbing back into his seat.

Cecilia passed under the darkness of the little porch and pushed the door open. A candle, shining in a beautiful old sconce on the wall opposite, showed her the little hall and the stairs leading out of it. She was surprised; the sconce was unusual and beneath it hung a mirror framed in tortoiseshell and walnut. In the hall was an oak chest, old and carved, and beside it a chair that even Cecilia’s quick and untutored glance showed her to be of age and value. Mrs. Granville was obviously not in quite the straitened circumstances she had supposed.

Cecilia heard behind her the sound of the car in motion: ‘Fraser turning round: what a hurry he’s in,’ she thought. ‘I mustn’t keep him.’ She ran swiftly up the little stairs: at the top, to her relief, she saw a neatly dressed, elderly woman in a white apron, who stood awaiting her, her hand on the first door on the left.

‘Mrs. Granville?’ enquired Cecilia.

The woman without answering opened the door and smilingly motioned her in. As Cecilia was passing through she said very respectfully, ‘I hope you’ll find everything you require, my lady. Dinner’s at half-past seven.’ Before Cecilia could recover from the blinding flash of her astonishment, the door had been quietly closed behind her. She gazed about her, her heart drumming in her ears, her power of motion struck from her: she was in a bedroom much larger than she had expected, simply but beautifully furnished, and she was alone.

Her eyes, hardly able to see clearly for the wild flooding of her emotion, travelled first to the big double bed on her left-hand side: on the pillow was placed a night-gown sachet worked with the initials C.H.; lying on the bed, near the foot, spread out and hanging down was a filmy, little, white evening dress; on the chair close to it were white silk stockings and a neatly folded pile of delicate, new under-garments; beneath the chair were a pair of small white satin shoes. With a sharp intake of the breath Cecilia, leaning forward, her eyes widened to great big O's, recognised part of her wedding trousseau. For a moment she stood transfixed, then she tiptoed up to the bed, and timidly touched the dress with curious finger—it was real, it was no dream.

She came out of her trance, darted to the chest of drawers, snatched open the top drawer; it was filled with the new possessions that had once been hers, that she had never thought to see again. She gazed at the dressing-table: the first thing she saw upon it, in the centre, in a little blue mug, was a small bunch of primroses. She bent over them to draw in their scent with ecstasy and then realised that the dressing-table was strewn with the little personal objects that she had packed for her honeymoon, and that pinned to the pin-cushion was a folded note in Lady Wraybourne's handwriting. She seized upon it, tore it open, and read:—

'DEAREST CECILIA,—Just in case you're conscientious, the children's parents will be home in a day or two now. Till then we'll manage perfectly. I've still to get your wedding-present: just as well I forgot it or you might have remembered my name. I hope you tidied my desk nicely. Best wishes always.

'S. I. W.'

Cecilia's eyes filled with tears: she put the note down on the dressing-table unseeing and her hand came into contact with something cold. Dashing her tears away, she looked at it: she saw before her, lying in its open case, the big emerald pendant that she had sent back to her husband inside her sable coat: beside it, neatly folded, was laid the handkerchief in which it had been wrapped. She sprang to the wardrobe and threw open its door: nothing had been forgotten, nothing; the splendid coat hung there, smiling, it seemed, quite kindly at the shabby garment she was wearing.

She was still standing in the room, upright and wide-eyed, drawing uneven breaths and telling herself that in spite of her senses

both of sight and touch she must be a spirit in a dream when she started convulsively and strained with all her might to listen. Some one had come into the room on the other side of the door immediately facing her. As she stood there, rigid, she heard the sound of water falling from a tap. It fell and fell : it seemed to her like no sound she had ever heard in all her life before, at once so musical and so marvellous, a magic unbelievable in its strangeness and its beauty.

Then suddenly amidst the splashing of water arose the sound of a man's most cheerful singing. John's voice, and these were the words he sang :

‘ Warm, hands, warm ;
The men have gone to plough :
If you want to warm your hands,
Warm your hands now ! ’

Cecilia's lips parted in a little, unconscious smile. She felt mechanically to make sure that she had safely on a ribbon round her neck the two rings from which she had never been parted, then she drew a very deep breath and, with her head back and her eyes half-closed, stretched out both her hands in silence towards the irresponsible, inexpressibly wonderful sound.

THE END

DANIEL DEFOE.

(Born 1661; died April 26, 1731.)

THE celebration of centenaries may be somewhat overdone, but no student of English History or lover of English Literature would willingly miss the opportunity afforded by the bicentenary of the death of Daniel Defoe. For Defoe's place in the history both of Politics and Letters is by general consent unique. Multitudes of men, women and children remember him only as the author of *Robinson Crusoe*. That alone were enough to secure him immortality. But Defoe was much more than the author of *Robinson Crusoe*, more even than the father of the English novel. High moralists may, indeed, assail him as a supreme humbug, a consummate liar, a political adventurer; Nonconformists cannot forget that he turned aside from the work to which he was dedicated to pursue more devious ways of 'edification'; Anglicans remember that his clever ruse entrapped them into approval of his *Shortest Way with the Dissenters*; to the Tories he was the pensioner of Dutch William; the Whigs suspected the hireling of Harley; but, for all that, no student of our political history, or of social and economic evolution, can fail to acknowledge a heavy debt to the amazing fecundity of the author of some 250 'pieces,' or admire the range and versatility of an indisputable genius. If he cannot be commended for all he did, Defoe, at any rate, gave distinction to everything he wrote. Nor can he be disregarded as a serious contributor to contemporary history. His *History of the Union* is the best contemporary account we have of the most important and enduring achievement of the reign of Queen Anne. Swift might satirise it:

'The Queen has lately lost a part
Of her entirely English heart,
For want of which by way of botch
She pieced it up again with Scotch.
Blest Revolution! which creates
Divided hearts, united States!
See how the double nation lies
Like a rich coat with skirts of frieze;
As if a man in making posies,
Should bundle thistles up with roses.'

That is excellent fooling ; but if the gloomy Dean of St. Patrick's had done half as much to advance the proposed Union between England and Ireland as the arch-humbug did to smooth the path for the Union between England and Scotland, he would to-day be remembered with even greater gratitude than the author of *Gulliver*, the *Tale of a Tub* and the *Drapier Letters* can always claim.

Another instance. It is interesting to note that it is to Defoe's *Tour through Great Britain* that Mr. Trevelyan, in his latest and not least brilliant work, has gone as the soundest and most reliable foundation on which to build up his vivid picture of the social and economic condition of England in the first years of the eighteenth century.

But a work like the *Tour*, though it called for industry and keen powers of observation, might have been produced by a lesser man than Defoe. Arthur Young was hardly a genius, but in this particular sphere he was greater than Defoe. Defoe's special claim upon the remembrance of posterity lies in the fact that he was the first to perceive a unique opportunity for the pen, and to exploit it with incomparable industry and skill.

To appreciate the nature of the opportunity, and Defoe's use of it, we must recall, in brief outline, the dates and facts of his life.

He was born soon after the Restoration, in 1660 or 1661. He died, after alternations of dire poverty and great prosperity, under mysterious circumstances, in 1731. He came of the soundest stock to be found in England—that of the yeomen. His grandfather, James Foe, kept a pack of hounds and farmed his own land at Elton in Northamptonshire: his father, a younger son, was a butcher by trade and a Nonconformist by persuasion and lived in St. Giles's, Cripplegate, where Daniel was born. Daniel was intended for the Ministry, and to that end was well educated under Charles Morton, an ejected divine who kept an 'academy' at Newington Green. Before he was twenty Defoe (for he was as much alive to the importance of nomenclature as Jowett) had abandoned the idea of the ministry, assumed the prefix *De* and embarked on Journalism. He took part in the Monmouth rebellion, but with characteristic luck escaped the penal consequences of that folly, and in 1685 set up as a 'hose-factor' in Cornhill. He so far prospered as to be admitted a Liveryman of the City in 1688, and he was one of those who joined William of Orange in his unobstructed march on London. Politics apparently interfered, as they often do, with business, for in 1692 Defoe was declared bank-

rupt, but by the assiduous use of his pen (and perhaps other talents) he had contrived by 1705 to pay off £12,000 of the £17,000 which he owed his creditors. Throughout the reign of William III he was an active supporter of the Whig hero, and took a leading part in the promotion of the 'Kentish Petition' in 1701. Early in the reign of Queen Anne, however, he accepted service under Harley, though he continued to support the Whigs in the prosecution of the war against Louis XIV. In the last years of Queen Anne the European situation had so completely changed that Defoe could, with perfect consistency, support the Tory demand for peace, and with equal consistency could, on the Queen's death, oppose the restoration of the Stuarts. But this did not save him from prosecution by the Whigs. That Defoe was playing a double game is likely enough; but who was not? Were not Tories like Harley and St. John corresponding with Herrenhausen, and the Whigs with St. Germain's? Neither party was in a position to cast a stone at a slippery journalist. But the Whigs did, and so enabled Defoe to continue in the employment of Tory journals while serving the interests of the Whigs. Journalism kept him busy until the end in 1731.

Truly an unsavoury record: yet who shall say where the patriot ended and the knave began? Professor Minto, perhaps the most discriminating of his biographers, professes his inability to unravel the two elements in Defoe's character:

'Defoe [he concludes] was a wonderful mixture of knave and patriot. Sometimes pure knave seems to be uppermost, sometimes pure patriotism, but the mixture is so complex, and the energy of the man so restless, that it almost passes human skill to unravel the two elements. The author of *Robinson Crusoe* is entitled to the benefit of every doubt.'

He is; but there is much to be recorded before we come to the composition of that immortal work.

The opportunity offered to Defoe by the circumstances of his day was twofold: it arose, on the one hand, from the condition of politics, after the consummation of the two-sided revolution of the seventeenth century; on the other, from the quickening of intellectual curiosity among the middle classes, and the provision of a new literary medium in the development of English prose. Summarily stated, the Revolution of 1688 substituted the ascen-

dancy of a territorial aristocracy for that of the Crown, and from that date until 1832 England was governed, and on the whole with extraordinary success, by a few great families entrenched in the two Houses of Parliament, and carrying on the actual government of the country through the novel device of a parliamentary Cabinet. But all through this period, and with increasing momentum towards the close of it, a new class was pushing its way towards political ascendancy : the moneyed men and merchants of the towns, largely recruited from the ranks of ecclesiastical Nonconformists. The middle classes, with improved education and growing wealth, were more and more anxious for better and more regular information on public affairs. But there existed no means of satisfying their curiosity. One of the most significant sequelæ of the Revolution was the refusal of the House of Commons to renew the Licensing Act of 1662. The Press was thus emancipated from the control of the Government. But the reporting of Parliamentary debates continued to be a technical breach of privilege ; nor indeed were there any capable reporters. From Parliamentary speeches, therefore, the public could learn nothing ; the ' platform,' as a medium of political discussion, had not been erected ; the ' Press ' in the modern sense did not exist.

Without Parliament, platform, or Press, how were the hungry sheep to be fed ? Defoe leapt into the breach. Of middle-class origin, well educated, a good linguist and not untravelled, a Nonconformist in religion, and keenly interested in public affairs, no one could have been better equipped for satisfying the public demand which he so accurately gauged. The audience he had in view were serious-minded folk. They turned away in disgust from the obscenities of Mrs. Aphra Behn and the levity of Restoration comedy. They would not, like their social superiors, waste time over a work of fiction. Defoe, when he gave them fiction, always pretended it was fact. When he gave them fact it was quite as entertaining as fiction. Defoe was not, of course, left long in enjoyment of a monopoly. The reign of Queen Anne is commonly acclaimed as the ' Augustan age ' of English literature. It had all the characteristics. Never had successful literature been so well rewarded ; never had it been more perfect in finish or so profuse in volume ; never had the association between politics and literature been so intimate :

' Then my retreat the best companions grace
Chiefs out of war, and statesmen out of place.'

Pope was only one of many. Bolingbroke, Swift, Atterbury, Arbuthnot and Prior were among the distinguished men of Letters who served the interests of the Tory party; Addison and Steele, not to mention Defoe, did similar work for the Whigs. It was, indeed, the hey-day of the pamphlet, and Defoe was the prince of pamphleteers.

Four questions in particular were in Defoe's day agitating the minds of Englishmen: the first was the position of England in European politics—the new relation established between the island and the Continent by the accession of Dutch William and his opposition to Louis XIV. The second was the position of the Anglican Establishment and the relations between the State and the Protestant Nonconformists. The third was the legislative union with Scotland, and closely connected therewith, the question of the succession to the throne of both countries.

To the discussion of all these matters Defoe made contributions which were not only exceedingly effective as contemporary polemics, but have permanently enriched political literature.

Defoe was a convinced Whig: William III, a Calvinist, but large-minded and tolerant, was his hero. But a less popular sovereign has never perhaps occupied the English throne. Nor, even apart from his brusque manners and ungenial temper, was the reason far to seek. The Whig leaders had invited him to England to help them to establish a parliamentary oligarchy; he came with the sole object of engaging his new subjects in a European crusade against France. Englishmen then, as always, were insular in their outlook, and interested in continental politics only so far as they affected commerce. They disliked the expense of war, and dreaded a standing army as a menace to domestic liberties, as a rival to Parliament, and as the appropriate instrument of a dictatorship, such as Cromwell's. To justify intervention in continental affairs and to defend a military establishment demanded real courage. That was a quality Defoe never lacked. In 1694 he published *The Englishman's Choice and True Interest in the vigorous prosecution of the War against France, and serving King William and Queen Mary and acknowledging their Right*. The title was cumbrous, but the services of the courageous pamphleteer were rewarded by his appointment as accountant to the Commissioners of the Glass Duty. About the same time Defoe started in business in Tilbury as a manufacturer of pantiles, and made a great deal of money. In 1695 he published another pamphlet—by some critics accounted

one of his best—*An Argument showing that a Standing Army with consent of Parliament was not inconsistent with a Free Government.*

Peace was made with Louis at Ryswick in 1697 ; but hardly was the Treaty concluded when the peace of Europe was again threatened by the question of the succession to the Spanish throne. What in the world did it matter to Englishmen who reigned at Madrid ? That question was in everyone's mouth. In a series of pamphlets (1700–1), Defoe, always ready to breast the stream, provided the answer, and showed them that it mattered much to English pockets and English trade. But never did Defoe show his courage—not to say his audacity—so conspicuously as when, at the height of the agitation against 'Dutch' William, he published (January, 1701) his *True-born Englishman*. 'Dutch' William indeed ! and who are *you* to rail at foreigners ? Surely the most mongrel race that ever lived ! Romans, Gauls, Greeks, Lombards, Saxons, Danes, Scots, Picts, Irish.

'From this amphibious ill-born mob began
That vain, ill-natured thing, an Englishman.

These are the heroes that despise the Dutch,
And rail at new-come foreigners so much,
Forgetting that themselves are all derived
From the most scoundrel [? mongrel] race that ever lived ;
A horrid crowd of rambling thieves and drones,
Who ransacked Kingdoms and dispeopled towns,
The Pict and painted Briton, treacherous Scot,
By hunger, theft, and rapine hither brought ;
Norwegian pirates, buccaneering Danes,
Whose red-haired offspring everywhere remains,
Who, joined with Norman French, compound the breed
From whence your true-born Englishmen proceed.

The wonder which remains is at our pride,
To value that which all men else deride.
For Englishmen to boast of generation
Cancels their knowledge and lampoons the nation.
A true-born Englishman's a contradiction,
In speech an irony, in fact a fiction.'

And then your nobility ! What a crew ! Royal bastards and
ennobled shopkeepers !

'Six bastard Dukes survive his [Charles II's] reign,
The labours of Italian Castlemaine,
French Portsmouth, Tabby Scot, and Cambrian.'

For the rest :

'Wealth, howsoever got, in England makes
Lords of mechanics, gentlemen of rakes :
Antiquity and birth are needless here ;
'Tis impudence and money makes a peer.

Great families of yesterday we show
And lords whose parents were the Lord knows who.'

Had he lived two centuries later Defoe himself, prince of journalists, could hardly have escaped a peerage, and would certainly have died a millionaire.

For sheer audacity this superb doggerel could hardly be matched. Yet Defoe himself surpassed it in his *Shortest Way with the Dissenters* (1702). If in *The True-born Englishman* Defoe descended, albeit most effectively, into Billingsgate, in the *Shortest Way* he showed himself a master of pure and sustained irony.

William was dead : Anne was Queen. The Tories and Anglicans looked with hopeful expectation to a Stuart sovereign. A Bill to put a stop to the growing practice of 'Occasional Conformity' was designed to placate them. It was a practice which did not commend itself to the robust Nonconformity of Defoe. He had condemned it in 1698 in a pamphlet written on the text : 'If the Lord be God, follow Him ; but if Baal, then follow him.' In 1702 he returned to the charge. Why should this Bill hurt any honest Dissenter ? True, the Bill was not designed to purge or purify the dissenting body, but it would none the less have that effect, and Dissenters consequently ought to welcome it. But they did not ; nor did they relish Defoe's argument. Still less did they like his *Shortest Way with the Dissenters*. Impersonating for the nonce the 'High-flying Tory Churchman,' he argued that the right way of dealing with Nonconformity was to pass and punctually execute one severe law, under which all dissenting congregations should be banished from the realm and their preachers hanged.

Then 'would all come to Church, and one age would make us all one again.' The 'High-Fliers,' not perceiving the irony, applauded the bold suggestion : the Dissenters poured out the vials of their wrath upon their bloodthirsty brother. When the irony

was exposed, both parties were equally enraged. An explanation was offered, but not accepted, and to save his printer and publisher from prosecution Defoe acknowledged the authorship. The pamphlet was burnt by order of Parliament, and the author was condemned at the Old Bailey to pay a heavy fine, do penance three times in the Pillory, and to be imprisoned during the Queen's pleasure, and on release to find security for good behaviour for seven years.

Irony is costly ; but the Pillory gave Defoe the chance of an advertisement ; nor did he miss it. His *Hymn to the Pillory* composed in gaol was a bold defiance of the Government, and an appeal to the mob which assembled to witness the execution of his sentence. The Pillory was transformed into a platform ; from a humiliating exposure was extracted a resounding triumph. The tract, hawked among the spectators, found a ready sale. No wonder : it is full of brilliant satire, which reaches its highest point in the concluding lines, addressed, of course, to the Pillory :

'Thou bugbear of the law, stand up and speak,
Thy long misconstrued silence break ;
Tell us who 'tis upon the ridge stands there,
So full of fault and yet so void of fear ;
And from the paper in his hat
Let all mankind be told for what.

'Tell them it was because he was too bold
And told those truths which should not have been told,
Extol the justice of the land,
Who punish what they will not understand.

Tell them that this is his reward,
And worse is yet for him prepared,
Because his foolish virtue was so nice,
As not to sell his friends, according to his friends' advice.

Tell them the men that place him here
Are friends (? scandals) unto the times ;
Are at a loss to find his guilt
And can't commit his crimes.'

For poignant satire and concentrated contempt the last two lines have never surely been equalled.

Defoe was not, however, content to be merely a destructive

critic, a brilliant satirist. Though his energies were dissipated, he had the middle-class aptitude for trade, and his head was full of ideas for constructive reforms. His *Essay on Projects*, for example, is marvellously modern in outlook. Even in the twentieth century Defoe would be accounted a 'progressive.' Banking, road-transport, insurance, friendly societies, pensions, bankruptcy law, education, the merchant service in peace and war—no schemes are too large for this large-minded man, no details too small for his meticulous consideration. As late as half a century ago the section he devotes to the education of women would have been almost revolutionary:

'I have often [he writes] thought of it as one of the most barbarous customs in the world, considering us as a civilised and a Christian country, that we deny the advantages of learning to women. We reproach the sex every day with folly and imperitance, while I am confident, had they the advantages of education equal to us, they would be guilty of less than ourselves.'

He then proceeds to draw up in minute detail 'the draught of an Academy for women.'

But of all Defoe's schemes for constructive reform, much the most important was that for the legislative union between England and Scotland. That was a 'project' very near to his heart. Keenly interested in the commercial prosperity of the country, he was convinced that political union would do much to promote it. Moreover, he had in 1704 accepted an 'appointment' (in plain English a pension) from the Crown, and had entered, though secretly, the service of the Government, and in particular of Harley. He vehemently protested (in his *Review*) against all the little and scandalous charges of being hired and employed. But this was a 'diplomatic falsehood'—a device not difficult for Defoe, with whom imagination was much stronger than veracity. Nor can it be denied that he earned his pay. Not only was he compelled to undertake (the description is his) 'the long, tedious, and hazardous journey' to Edinburgh, but his sojourn in the Scottish capital exposed him to as much danger 'as a Grenadier on a counter-scarp.' Despite his protests, it was commonly believed that he was 'Harley's spy.' Yet in a sense he was not lying when he wrote, 'I condemn as not worth mentioning the suggestions of some people of my being employed thither [in Scotland] on the interest of a party.' He was engaged, as he truly averred, in the

national interest. Moreover, he was technically as well as morally correct. The Ministry of which Harley and St. John were then members (1704-8) was a *Coalition*—if you will, a *National*—Ministry, and as such well qualified to carry on a truly national struggle against Louis XIV, and to carry through a task of national importance—the union with Scotland. Defoe, then, was engaged on a patriotic mission, of which he had no reason to be ashamed, and which he fulfilled with courage and skill, if with some damage to his reputation for veracity.

After Harley and St. John left the Ministry (1708) Defoe reverted to his Whig allegiance, and with complete consistency steadily supported the war policy of his party, and condemned the Tory agitation for a 'premature' peace. When in 1710 Harley and the 'moderate' Tories returned to power, Defoe found no difficulty in supporting them against the 'High-fliers,' nor indeed (after 1711) against the Whigs, who urged the continuance of a war which (as Bolingbroke conclusively argued) had ceased to be either 'just or necessary.' Defoe, for once, cordially agreed both with Bolingbroke and Swift, and though none of his pro-Peace pamphlets equalled in effectiveness Swift's brilliant *Conduct of the Allies*, he contributed powerfully to that reaction of opinion which enabled the Tories to stop the war and to conclude the Treaty of Utrecht.

A Tory pensioner Defoe might be, but he was no Jacobite, and during the last two years of Queen Anne's life and reign he poured out a rapid succession of pamphlets: *A Seasonable Warning*; *Hannibal at the Gates*; *And What if the Pretender should Come?*; *An Answer to the Question, What if the Queen should Die?* and I know not how many more. As usual, his irony was rather too subtle, and the Whigs prosecuted the author whose relations with Harley they not unjustly suspected. Nevertheless, after the accession of Hanoverian George, he managed, not without difficulty, to regain the confidence of the Whigs, though he continued, by arrangement with them, to pass as a Tory, and to write for the Tory journals.

Such conduct is hard to justify, and it ultimately brought disaster, not undeserved, upon Defoe. During the last five years of his life he lost the confidence of both parties and died, as we have seen, in obscurity and poverty.

Yet there was a brilliant lining to the dark clouds. It was in

his old age that Defoe gave to the world the work which has made him immortal.

Fiction was not exactly a new experiment for Defoe. *Robinson Crusoe* was less, therefore, a new departure than a natural development of the native genius and the lifelong occupation of its author. Moreover, the way had long been preparing for the advent of the novel, as a new species of literary art.

The Romance of Chivalry had died a natural death in the realism of the Renaissance. The Elizabethan poets and the translators of the Bible had perfected a new instrument—the English language. John Bunyan had popularised autobiography under the guise of allegory, or shall we rather say had written the biography not of a man, but of mankind? Dryden had taught what modern English prose in the hands of a master might mean. The instrument was perfected. The audience was waiting.

Defoe, unwearied by his tempestuous career in trade and politics, as pamphleteer and journalist, saw his chance and promptly seized it. He had already satisfied one demand by the production of his pamphlets and papers. But the new public craved amusement as well as instruction. The amusement, however, must not be too obtrusive. The Puritan conscience demanded that the jam should be coated with powder. The amazing popularity of Sir Roger de Coverley had revealed the dimensions of the new public. The papers in the *Spectator* contained the elements of the novel—the analysis of character, the reactions of character on incident and incident on character. But the elements were not compounded into a coherent whole. Defoe resolved to compound them, and *Robinson Crusoe* was the result. Is it still read? I can only say that I have lately been re-reading it, and with such absorbed interest that it has had the same effect on me as *The Mysteries of Udolpho* on Catherine Morland: it has ‘kept me awake o’ nights.’ What is the secret of its power and popularity? A French critic has, I think, probed it:

‘It seems [he writes] as though our author had performed all Crusoe’s labours, so exactly does he describe them, with numbers, quantities, dimensions, like a carpenter, potter, or old tar. Never was such a sense of the real, before or since. . . . Defoe creates illusion; for it is not the eye which deceives us, but the mind, and that literally. . . . All his talents lie in this; even his imperfections aid him. His lack of art becomes profound art; his negligences, repetitions, prolixity, contribute to the illusion; we cannot

imagine that such and such a detail, so minute, so dull, is invented; an inventor would have suppressed it; it is too tedious to have been put in on purpose: art chooses, embellishes, interests; art therefore cannot have piled up this heap of dull and vulgar accidents; it is the truth.'

The truth it was. It was based, as everyone knows, on the true story of the sojourn of Alexander Selkirk on the uninhabited island of Juan Fernandez. Selkirk was one of the companions of Captain William Dampier, had joined his privateering expedition to the Southern Seas in 1703, but had quarrelled with his captain, one Thomas Stradling, and been put ashore on Juan Fernandez, whence, five years later, he was rescued by Captain Woodes Rogers. Everyone in those days had heard the story; Defoe immortalized it.

His part was nominally that of an editor, and in that capacity he commended the story in an eminently characteristic preface:

'The story is told with modesty, with seriousness, and with a religious application of events to the uses to which wise men always apply them, viz. to the instruction of others by this example, and to justify and honour the wisdom of Providence. . . . The Editor believes the thing to be a just history of fact; neither is there any appearance of fiction in it.'

There is not. It is a dull record of actual events. Dull! Yet, as I have hinted, still calculated to compel the absorbed attention even of those who are no longer young. For there is much more in *Robinson Crusoe* than the perfection of verisimilitude.

'No book [as a Scottish critic of Defoe has finely said] can live for ever which is not firmly organised round some central principle of life. . . . In *Robinson Crusoe* we have a real growth from a vigorous germ. The central idea round which the tale is organised, the position of a man cast ashore on a desert island, abandoned to his own resources, suddenly shot beyond help or counsel from his fellow-creatures, is one that must live as long as the uncertainty of human life endures.'

Thus, in both the essential characteristics of his immortal work Defoe satisfied the public taste which he had gauged so nicely. The story was didactic: it was written to warn the impious: 'to the instruction of others by this example; to justify and honour the wisdom of Providence.' And it was no fiction, but sober fact. The respectable bourgeois who pored over its laboured but fascinating pages could lay to his soul the flattering unction

that he was not frittering away precious hours over a frivolous romance.

Robinson Crusoe did not stand alone. The method so profitably adopted in that case was applied to others, of which a bare mention must here suffice. *The Journal of the Great Plague of 1665* (written in view of another dreaded visitation in 1721) was long regarded as the genuine work of a contemporary. The *Memoirs of a Cavalier* deceived Lord Chatham. *The Life and Death of Count Paktul*, the Swedish statesman, was ascribed on the title-page to 'the Lutheran Minister who assisted him in his last hours and faithfully translated out of a *High Dutch Manuscript*'—and so on. Professor Sir Walter Raleigh assigned special significance to the *True Relation of the Appearance of one Mrs. Veal, the next day after her death, to one Mrs. Bargrave at Canterbury, the 8th of September 1705, which Apparition recommends the perusal of Drelincourt's Book of Consolations against the Fear of Death* (1705). But unless Defoe was employed by the publisher of Drelincourt's book to assist the sale of a 'new remainder,' I fail to understand on what grounds Sir Walter (though supported by an even greater Sir Walter) based his opinion.

But enough. Very regretfully I bid an abrupt *adieu* (may it only be *au revoir*!) to the wholly human and attractive reprobate, who, with the fire of indisputable genius, illumined the political records of his time, and permanently enriched English literature.

J. A. R. MARRIOTT.

A DAY ON THE TORRIDGE.

BY ARTHUR GOLDRING.

I HAVE an urge to catch fish. How I came by it I don't know, but I discovered it quite early in life—when I was a boy of twelve years old. I remember that day as clearly as if it were yesterday. I had been taken to a picnic in Hertfordshire, and in order to keep me out of mischief one of the party gave me a rod and line and started me fishing in a lake, or large pond, in the woods. As luck would have it I got into a hole full of perch; they were on the feed and bit savagely. I pulled them out one after another—they were not very large, averaging about 4 oz.—and I think I caught thirty or forty of them. When I had finished I was obsessed with the fishing mania and the obsession has remained with me from that day to this. I may say in passing I have fished in many waters; for pike in reservoirs and lakes; for roach, dace, and chub in the Lea, the Thames, the Ouse, the Cherwell, and the New River; for trout in the tributaries of the Severn, the Exe, the Torridge, and many other streams in Devonshire, Shropshire, Wales, and the Midlands, but never have I had a day's fishing which I enjoyed more than that first day, fifty-seven years ago. I do not wish to pass myself off as a great fisherman. I have had neither the time nor the money; you require both if you wish to excel in this particular sport. I regard the people who fish the Torridge for salmon, and when the season here is over move into Scotland or slip over to Norway or Nova Scotia, with great reverence. The equipment contained in their fishing huts would almost absorb my yearly income. They have dozens of rods, miles of fishing lines, more flies than they can count, and innumerable reels, winches, waders, creels, baskets, landing-nets, gaffs, and tailers. They can devote three months at a stretch to the unbroken pursuit of their favourite sport. I have only one rod, a few casts and not more than four or five dozen flies, and can only get a day's fishing now and then.

Compared with these sportsmen who do the thing on a grand scale I feel rather like a small boy fishing for sticklebacks with a bit of cotton for a line and a bent pin for a hook. I can only claim to be a very humble and not particularly skilful fisherman, and yet

I think nobody enjoys a day's fishing more than I do. It is, therefore, a matter for gratitude that I am Rector of a parish through which flows one of the most beautiful salmon rivers in England and where trout are also to be found for the benefit of persons like myself to whom salmon fishing is impossible because of the expense. It was not always so. I was talking to an old resident the other day who said he could remember the time, not so long ago, when for £10 he could get all the fishing from Dolton to Torrington—about eight or nine miles. But since the War everybody who has any leisure seems to have taken to fishing, and £70 to £100 is paid for a rod for the season over a stretch of three or four miles. This, of course, is only one item in the expenses, all told they mount up to a very considerable sum. If the season happens to be a bad one those who take a rod get a very poor return for their money. One man, who was fishing here about eight years ago and paid, I think, £100 for the privilege, caught *two dace* and that was all. He thought they were grayling and I hadn't the heart to undeceive him; and I have known others who have paid the same sum and have only caught two or three fish. We very often get a spell of dry weather in March and April, cold winds and bright sunshine, and under such conditions good sport is, of course, out of the question. I have a day's fishing when I feel I want a change. Of late years I have given up taking regular holidays. I have come to the conclusion that the advantages to be derived from them do not counterbalance the sacrifice of the comforts and conveniences of one's home. The older you get the more you realise that there is 'no place like home.' So I take a day off now and then as I feel I require it, and I know I require it when little things in the parish begin to irritate me. Then it is time for a day on the river. June is my favourite month for fishing; the salmon fishing is over by then and the river is free, the trout are in good condition and the water not too cold for wading. Unfortunately you can't fish the Torridge without wading. I prefer brook fishing, as then you don't have to wade. There is a brook which runs at the bottom of my glebe, about two hundred yards from my house, which is full of trout but so overgrown that it is impossible to get a fly on it. If it were only cleared it would suit me admirably, as I am over a mile from the river and very nearly three miles from the best trout water. If this should catch the eye of those who own the meadows through which the brook runs I hope that they may be moved to have the trees lopped or cut down. They will have my most opulent blessing if they do—to say nothing of plenty of firewood.

My choice of a fishing day does not rest entirely on the state of my nerves but also on the weather, and to-day is an ideal day for fishing. It has rained a bit during the night and the water ought to be in just the right condition, there is a gentle south-westerly breeze hardly strong enough to stir a leaf, it is cloudy but not thundery, the sun's rays are enveloped by a curtain of cloud through which you get just a faint impression of them, the air is soft and delicious. It does not take me long to make my preparations. My cook puts me up some luncheon—some sandwiches, hard-boiled eggs, a piece of cake, and a small bottle of Bass. My waders are down at the old Mill by the Abbot's Bridge where I am going to fish. So all I have to burden myself with is my rod and my landing-net. I always make up two or three casts before I start. We do not get a very large variety of flies on the Torridge. The Blue Upright and the March Brown are the two flies commonly used. On most streams the latter is of no use after March and April, but on the Torridge you can use it all through the season. I sometimes try a Red Spinner, or an Olive Dun, or a Cow Dun, but usually come back to the two old originals as I may call them. The Blue Upright is like charity, 'it never faileth.'

My companion in these expeditions is my old black cocker spaniel—Nigger. He loves these outings and I dare not leave him behind, the look of reproach he would give me if I did would haunt me all day and he would certainly howl the place down—he has the most blood-curdling howl I ever heard, just what one can imagine the wail of a lost soul in the other world might be. So we start happily together up the Rectory drive, then through a long narrow lane, the hedges of which are full of honeysuckle and wild flowers, then downhill over three fields and through a plantation of young firs and here we are at the mill. Beaford Mill is the only mill left in the district and is a most picturesque place; the house cannot be less than three hundred years old, but the mill has been there from time immemorial. It does not take me long to get into my waders and it is only a step to the river. I always begin at the Abbot's Bridge and fish upstream to the Weir which is just about a quarter of a mile above it. I may say in passing that I am not a dry-fly fisherman. People do occasionally fish with a dry fly on this river, but I don't think they do any better than the old-fashioned 'chuck and chance it' fishermen. I don't think the Torridge is really adapted to dry-fly fishing; you so seldom see a rising or moving fish, for the trout lie mostly in the stickles and there are

many places where it is difficult to get a fly on the water at all, so you can only fish with a dry fly in a limited area.

The bridge has three arches and there is a spot just under the arch nearest to me where I have sometimes risen a fish, so I make my first cast there. I still feel the kind of thrill I used to feel when I began fishing over half a century ago, my instincts have not been sublimated by the influences of twentieth-century civilisation. I wait the result of my cast with a quiver of expectation, but no, there is nothing doing. I make two or three casts over the same spot and then turn up-stream. All the fish lie under the opposite bank which is flanked by alder bushes and, in places, overhung by trees. The next half-dozen casts are without result. Is it going to be a bad day after all? My next cast shows me that the fish are on the move for, much to my annoyance, I hook a salmonet or samlet about four inches long, and I am delayed a minute or two unhooking him and restoring him to the water. Under the alder bushes a yard or two farther up I see the water moving in a way which shows that there is a fairish-sized fish rolling about and swallowing any small delicacies which may come his way. I mean to get him if I can, but it is a difficult cast and there is more than a chance of getting hung up. However, here goes, my line shoots out and the fly strikes the bushes, I give the very slightest jerk and it drops simply and naturally right over my gentleman's nose. I hear a kind of 'cloop' and feel a sharp tug; I strike lightly and he is fairly hooked. The Torridge trout, although only common or garden brown trout, have plenty of fight in them. I get this fish away from the bushes and out into the midst of the stream where he jumps into the air about two or three feet and strikes the water with a flop with the object of breaking the line. Having made this gallant effort he tries to bolt for the bank, but I give him the butt and keep a tight line, and as he tires wind him in slowly until he is near enough to slip the landing-net under him. He probably weighs about $\frac{3}{4}$ lb.—the Torridge trout are not large—and I begin to feel happy. After two or three more casts I get in another, and another after that; three fish in about ten minutes; this promises to be quite a good day and I have all the best water to fish. I get one more fish, a half-pounder, also a dace, a bloated member of a plebeian family which battens upon the food supply of its betters, before I reach the pools beneath the weir. The weir, alas, is now a thing of the past. The greater part of it was swept away by a heavy flood two or three years ago and it was not thought worth while to restore it, so the mill is now worked by oil. But

on this day I am writing about the water is flowing over in cascades and forming four swirling, whirling, bubbling pools below, separated from each other by small islands of gravel which emerge from the bed of the river. A heavenly spot for a trout fisherman. If I don't get two fish out of each pool I shall be very much disappointed. I try the first pool on the left-hand side; it is the smallest of the four, sometimes I get a fish here and more often I don't, but to-day I hook a fish the very first cast I make, not a very big one, about 5 oz. perhaps, but large enough to keep. I wait a bit and then make two more casts and then a third right at the top of the pool close under the weir; from the way my rod bends I conclude that I have got hold of a better one this time and so it proves, he must be close on $\frac{3}{4}$ lb.

So far so good. I move down the river a few yards and wade across to an islet—about five yards by three—a good spot from which to fish the second pool. I know this pool of old, it is here that I expect to get into a heavy fish, and my expectation is not disappointed. I cast right across the swirling current at the tail of the pool, my fly has scarcely touched the water before it is wolfed (that is the only word I can use to describe the savage grab that is made at it) by something very much larger than anything I have yet hooked. My rod bends nearly double and I have to do some quick thinking as to the best way to deal with the situation. I dare not play him because the bed of the river at this part is full of snags—bits of rock, sunken boughs and all kinds of debris—if he gets among these I am certain to lose him. All I can do is to give him the butt as hard as I can and try and pull him within reach of my landing-net; it is a risk, but I take it. So I wind up rapidly and succeed in drawing him towards me. Alas! just as I am on the point of slipping the net under him he gives a tremendous wrench and off he goes with my fly in his mouth; he has broken me just above the shank of the hook. There is a story told of a Bishop at a picnic who, when he found that the luncheon had been ruined through the breaking of a bottle of wine which had been carelessly packed in the hamper said, 'I really feel that I must call upon one of the laity to express my feelings.' All I can say is—well, as the penalty inflicted on a clergyman for using a bad word is two years' suspension from his benefice I had better not give myself away. However, I console myself with the thought that I may have the chance of getting him another day. I put on a fresh fly and make another cast higher up the pool. Evidently they are biting freely to-day, for I am soon in another fish and

this time I am more fortunate ; he is not so large by a long way as the one I lost, but when I weigh him he is just over a pound ; a good size for this river. I take two fish out of the next pool and three out of the fourth pool, all about a half-pound each.

It is now nearly one o'clock (summer time), the sun is beginning to break through the clouds and the morning rise is pretty well over, so I decide that luncheon and a bit of rest will do me no harm and wade across the river to the little beach where my old dog is waiting me. He has already given me one or two impatient barks to let me know it is time to feed. I believe on these occasions he regards me as one of 'the afflicted of God' who requires looking after. Can there be anything more delightful than a simple meal eaten out of doors amid the surroundings in which I am fortunate enough to find myself to-day ? I can say with the Psalmist, 'The lot is fallen unto me in a fair ground,' for this is indeed a delightful spot. Opposite to me are the wooded hills which slope upward from the bank of the river, just above me the weir with its water-falls sparkling in the sun like jewels, to the right of me the river winds its way through a beautiful meadow to the old bridge which has stood there through the centuries. As I smoke my after-luncheon pipe I think about the many interesting people who must have crossed that bridge in old days ; the lordly Abbots of Hartland on their visits to the surcursal cell which the monastery had in this parish, the gift of the great Lady Joan Champernowne who styled herself Lady of Beaford and whose overpowering personality would not permit her to take her husband's—Sir Richard Willington's—name after her marriage ; George Monk, who plays such an important part in the Restoration ; Risdén, the Devonshire antiquary ; my old predecessor Robert Buckland (of whom I may have a word or two to say some other time), various members of the Rolle, Mallet, and Acland families, all of whom at various times were connected with the parish ; and a host of others too numerous to mention. While thinking about them I just 'lose myself' for a few minutes and come to earth again through Nigger licking my face, his way of reminding me that I am out to fish and not to snooze.

Although I know that the best fishing of the day is over and that there will be nothing much doing until the night rise which takes place just before dark, when, for about a half an hour, the fish bite furiously—I have often caught more fish in that single half-hour than I have caught during a whole day—yet I decide to fish the water the other side of the bridge. There is often a slight rise

in the afternoon and always the chance of picking up a stray fish or two whether there is a rise or not. So I make my way through a delightful wood to a pool about half a mile below the bridge, and here and in the adjoining water I manage to secure three or four trout and a couple of large dace. It is now nearly five o'clock; time to go to the mill-house for a cup of tea which the miller's wife is kind enough to give me. There I dawdle and chat for a spell and then slowly make my way home. I have had an exceptionally good day. As a rule, if I bring back a brace or a couple of brace of fish I feel I have not done so badly; to-day I have seven brace, quite a good bag. When, thirty years ago, I used to fish the Torridge with my old friend Jephson Gardner, who succeeded Jack Russell as Rector of Black Torrington, we used to think we had done rather badly if we did not get ten or a dozen brace in a morning. Now since the salmon have become more plentiful, the trout seem to have diminished. I am not the only one who has noticed this. One old man told me he remembers the time when he could fill his creel and his pockets fishing the water I have fished to-day. You can't always trust anglers' memories, but I think in this case he was reporting correctly.

Well, I reach home at last, tired but happy. A bath, a change, and a meal are the things I need and I am soon provided with all three. I don't like to say too much about eating and drinking lest I should be classed with those of whom the Apostle says 'ὅν ὁ Θεὸς ἡ κοιλία,' but I can't help telling you about my dinner to-night. Sit down with me in imagination to a couple of trout, nicely fried in egg and breadcrumbs, some lamb cutlets with new potatoes, and asparagus fresh out of the garden, followed by an omelette, and a dish of early strawberries. As I am a bit tired and this is a special occasion, I treat myself to a bottle of Barsac; simple country fare, all produced on the premises so to speak: could I dine much better, or any better, anywhere in London? By the time I have lit one of the excellent cigars which a relative kindly sends me at Easter and Christmas, nobody could persuade me that this is a miserable world!

I smoke and muse, reviewing all the incidents of the day, and when I have finished my cigar, I go to my bookshelves for something to read. A parcel of books has come from the library, they are all more or less tempting—Coulton's *Chaucer and His England*, one of Austin Freeman's detective stories, Canon Lacey's *Anglo-Catholic Faith* (a book which is sure to interest me as I knew the author in my early days and have the profoundest admiration for

his scholarship and erudition)—but none of them appeal to me to-night. I must have an old friend and as I run my eyes over my books I see him. Who can be a better companion on a night like this than honest Izaak Walton? So I take down the *Compleat Angler* and settle myself in my chair again to enjoy a quiet time before going to bed. The *Compleat Angler*—like Boswell's *Life of Johnson*, Pepys' *Diary*, and *Pickwick Papers*—is one of those books that you can open anywhere and go on. I open it and light upon a passage which seems to me to be quite in keeping with my mood to-night: 'He that views the ancient ecclesiastical canons, shall find hunting to be forbidden to churchmen, as being a turbulent, toilsome, perplexing recreation; but shall find angling allowed to churchmen as being a harmless recreation—a recreation that invites them to contemplation and quietness.' I turn over a leaf or two and come upon some words of Walton's great friend, Sir Henry Wotton, who says that angling 'was an employment for his idle time, which was not then idly spent—it was a rest to the mind, a cheerer of his spirits, a diverter of sadness, a calmer of unquiet thoughts, a moderator of passions, a procurer of contentedness.' Which testimony I can vouchsafe is perfectly true. And so I go on through these delightful pages, reading a bit here and a bit there like a bee gathering honey from different flowers. And then a most extraordinary thing happens. I seldom have visitors and rarely if ever at ten o'clock at night, but while I am reading a most charming old man with a benevolent smile walks into my study. He is wearing a conical-shaped hat, and a kind of frock-coat with broad skirts and short breeches and gaiters; he has a fishing creel swung over his shoulders by a leathern strap. Before I can recover from my surprise he sits down and begins to talk. His voice is delightful, but his language is rather quaint. He asks me to join him in a cup of 'barley wine' which he says is 'the good liquor which our honest forefathers used to drink of, the drink which preserved their health, and made them live so long, and do so many good deeds.' Then he opens his creel and draws out the very trout that I lost this morning, for there is my Blue Upright still in its mouth; the fish seems to regard me with a disdainful eye, and then—a voice says, 'I have brought the lamp, sir. Will you be wanting anything else to-night?' To which I reply, 'Eh? Ah? What? No thank you, call me at the usual time and I'll have a couple of those trout for breakfast!' My visitor seems to have slipped out unnoticed. I pick the *Compleat Angler* up from the floor 'and so to bed' after a perfect day.

THE FREEDOM OF GOPAL GAIN.

BY SHELLAND BRADLEY.

THE first faint light of dawn crept slowly over the face of the great river. The fine white mist that hung above it stirred faintly as if the breath of dawn had fanned it, raising it in one continuous cloud of curling eddies that thinned but not dissolved it. The trees of the dense forest, clothing the banks on either side right down to the water's edge, hung heavy with the morning dew. The sky above stretched in one unbroken expanse of set dull grey through which the sun had not yet pierced. River and forest and sky, there was nothing else. As far as the eye could reach, these three, with their dead monotony, held the world in thrall.

Just out of the broad river, at the mouth of a narrow *khal*, a country boat lay moored, sole sign of the handiwork of man, yet so primitive it fitted into its primeval surroundings as if a part of them. Low on the water its rough thatched roof and blackened timbers scarce showed against the background of mud bank and overhanging *sundri* trees. Only its crude brass-studded prow shone out as the rapidly growing light sought it and focused it into a tiny point of brilliance against the surrounding grey.

Within the boat three figures lay huddled, close together. Swathed from head to foot in coarse cotton cloths that, once white, seemed to have toned to a dull drabness to fit in with their surroundings, they stretched like mummies the full length of the tiny cabin, only a rough piece of reed matting between them and the uneven boards. Save for them the cabin was almost empty. In one corner stood a wooden box padlocked, a heap of fishing nets thrown carelessly upon it. Above it, on the mat wall that shut in one end of the cabin, hung a small mirror and round it four crude pictures of Indian gods in flaming colours. A large *gharra* of water stood propped against the box, and beside it an open earthenware vessel held a little grey heap of dead coals. At the other end, opposite the mat wall, an old brown blanket had been tied to keep out the night air.

For hours the three figures had lain dead still, wrapped in the

thick veil of sleep that descends with such impenetrable heaviness upon the Indian peasant. When at last, as dawn was breaking, the figure nearest the drawn blanket stirred within its cloth it was as if some animal moved inside a tied-up sack. Fumbling half-awake beneath its coverings, a head finally emerged, only to be quickly smothered again save for the face that slowly and drowsily turned and peered out into the dawn. For a brief space the eyes, still dull with sleep, gazed out unseeing. Then suddenly as if recollection and realisation had come to it, the whole figure struggled heavily to life and gathering itself together drew into a crouching attitude beside the curtain, looking outward with awakened interest. And as they looked the dull sleep-laden eyes grew keen, alight with life. Strange new thoughts crept vaguely into the ignorant, untutored mind of Gopal Gain, thoughts that he could not even remotely have expressed in words, thoughts that were scarcely thoughts at all, dim subconscious things that yet stirred him to the very depths of his being by their unwonted insistence. Behind them, the source from which all others radiated, the one great thought gripped him. At last he had escaped from the horror of the past two years. He was free.

The eyes, looking out of the young unbearded face into the dawning light, saw visions. It was but yesterday that he had returned home to this land of river and forest which until two years ago was the only world that he had known. For countless generations his forebears had lived beside the great river, fishermen and small cultivators, eking out an easy, happy-go-lucky existence from the well-stocked rivers and the fertile soil beside them. The small local market twenty miles away, where their fish and produce found a ready sale, furnished their only glimpse of the outside world. Improvident, using day by day all that came to them, they made no provision for the lean years that from time to time must surely come. Always there was a battle to be fought with Nature. In recent years she had been kind to them, giving them a sufficiency and not a superfluity of rain, and an abundance of good crops. But there were other years that even Gopal Gain remembered when she had seemed to have grown offended with mankind, when men had crouched in fear, watching their crops wither in the sun-baked earth or swept away in swift-moving cyclone or insidious slow-rising flood that not all their prayers to all their deities could stay. But now for years Nature had been in kindly mood. The crops had flourished. Last year it had

been a bumper harvest. This year even the most pessimistic admitted a fourteen-anna crop. It had not been necessity that had led Gopal Gain to leave the home that he had always known.

Looking out into the morning mists he wondered dully what it was that had urged him forth. It was surely something that was born within him, that he could not hope to explain even to himself. His forebears had dwelt among their own people. There was no memory even in that land of long memories of any one of them having ventured forth into the great world. The daily round of countless ages, the cultivation and the fishing had sufficed. Even in the year of Our Lord nineteen hundred and thirty-one they were still more than a hundred miles from a railway station, and that a tedious journey by country boat. For in this land of river and forest there are no roads. The water is the only highway. There was not one of all Gopal Gain's relations who had ever seen a train. But few of them had ever seen a steamer. Of constitutions and legislative assemblies they had never heard and would have entirely failed to grasp the meaning had they heard. They had lived always among primitive things, content with what they had because they knew naught else. But by some strange freak, perchance the spirit of unrest reaching mysteriously even to this far-off corner of the great land, there had stirred a new chord in the heart of Gopal Gain.

Looking out through the torn blanket of the fishing boat, confused memories came crowding through his mind. He had been but eighteen when the great thing happened, yet full grown, a man with all the virility and hardihood that long generations of sturdy ancestors had bequeathed to him. He remembered dimly how there had slowly come to him that curious sense of dissatisfaction and unrest. Absolutely untutored, with never a day's schooling—there was no school within a hundred miles of him—it was not from actual contact with the outside world that that new sense had come. How had it come? He could not begin either to remember or to understand. Yet somehow gradually he had come to chafe at the monotony of it all. He could not have put it into words. That would have been entirely and completely beyond him. But to him the daily round of cultivation and fishing, the weekly visits to the *hât* with its twenty miles of hard paddling up-stream, had grown irksome. He remembered wondering if no such sense of dissatisfaction had ever come to his father or to his elder brother. He had watched them carefully, but they had

shown no sign. They went on daily, busy always with little things, or loafing in the sunlight or sleeping long hours by day and night. He had never spoken of his feeling of unrest. That would have been unthinkable. Only sometimes his father, an autocrat in the little community in which they lived, had found cause to reprimand him for laziness and forgetfulness. He remembered that once his father had struck him. The blow had rankled. And then had come the fishing boats from Chittagong.

It was not often that they came this way. But that year they had anchored close beside their holding and his father had gone to them to sell his fish. Gopal had gone with him and while his father bargained he had talked with a youth but little older than himself. He was going to the tea gardens in Assam, he said. His brother was already there, earning many rupees a month. He would return soon with enough money to buy land and build a house. Gopal Gain remembered with what a thrill he had listened to the young man's words. It was his first real glimpse into the outside world. Tea gardens? What were they? He had never even heard of tea. Among the mountains? What were they? In this land of one vast level, unbroken even by the semblance of a hill, he could not conceive what mountains might be. But in those few moments while his father bargained with his fish, the great resolve had sprung up within him. He must go and see. To work with Sahibs? He had never seen a Sahib in all his life. Quickly he had dragged from the Chittagong youth all he knew. To get to the tea gardens? It was simple. All he had to do was to go to the recruiting office in Chittagong. But how was he, who knew nothing of these things, to get to Chittagong? The man had looked him up and down with a sudden appraising smile. There was a great scarcity of recruits in this year of plenty, and the recruiting officer would give good money for such recruits as the sturdy youth before him.

'We start for Chittagong to-night,' he said with meaning.

For a moment Gopal Gain remembered he had wavered, dazed by the greatness of the thing that faced him. But the Chittagong youth, awake to his own interest and greedy of the reward, had played with him though he in his ignorance had not suspected it. In still more glowing colours he had painted the prospects, and the end had been that Gopal Gain had promised to join him secretly that night, before the little fishing fleet sailed for Chittagong. Thoughts of home, of custom and tradition had been swept

away in the great madness that had seized him. He must see what lay beyond this vast expanse of forest and river. His chance had come, the chance of freedom from the dull daily round. At midnight he had crept silently out of the only home that he had ever known, without a thought of regret or compunction, to join a band of strangers. At dawn they had sailed. That was two years ago, to Gopal Gain an endless æon of time, a very abyss of horror from the very thought of which he shrank. He had set out to find freedom. And what had he found ?

Huddled up in his cotton cloth, watching the sun rise over the great river, a startled look came into his eyes. He shuddered and drew the cloth closer about him. Those two years, could they be real ? Surely they and all that had happened in them were only a nightmare, a figment of his brain. His hand stole quickly to his waist-cloth. The little roll of rupees, tied tightly there against his body so that none might rob him of them, was very real. At the comfortable feel of them the startled look died out of his face and he smiled. They were very good, those rupees. Before he set out he had never possessed a silver coin of his own in all his eighteen years. Now he counted them slowly again, running his fingers over them. There were thirty-one great whole rupees. There had been thirty-four yesterday, but he had returned in triumphant mood, not the prodigal come to claim the husks but a man with money in his loin-cloth, honestly earned in the sweat of his brow. A little swagger was surely excusable. He had provided the homestead with a feast, paid for out of his own money, a goat proudly bought from a neighbour with much honey and rice and *chupatties*, with sweets and rice beer. No wonder his father and brother still slept. They had eaten well at his expense. It was very good to have been able to give his father a better feast than his father had ever given him or indeed ever given to anyone in all his life. Gopal Gain smiled again.

The light was coming rapidly now. The sun, once it had burst through the dull-grey sky, was scattering the mists on every side. The great ball of splendour was just mounting over the top of the trees that lined the further bank of the river. Gopal Gain watched it with some dim awakening realisation of its beauties. It reminded him of that amazing journey up from Chittagong to the tea gardens. He had been terrified at his first sight of the train tearing into the station, seeming to lift the very platform under his feet. It was only the laughter of the little company he had joined that

had spurred him on to trust himself to it. Winding its way in amongst and through and over the great hills, by a feat of engineering wonderful even to the sophisticated, it had gone so fast and seemed to project itself so recklessly into space that he had been terrified again. All around him were undulating hills in strange fantastic shapes, and he who had known nothing but the flat expanse of the Sunderbans had quaked with fear. As they drew near their journey's end, they had pointed out to him still higher mountains thick with snow. He in his ignorance had asked what it was. How did it grow there? It was like the white woolly substance that fell from the great cotton tree near their local *hât*, and again his comrades scoffed. It fell from the skies, they told him and he had not known whether to believe them. If it fell like wool from the skies up there in the mountains, why did it never fall like that in the Sunderbans? His mind trailed off into vague imaginings. He had seen so much, but the more he had seen the less it seemed to him he understood.

His thoughts went slowly back to the tea garden itself. What a bitter disillusion it had been. Living in a long row of coolie huts among a crowd of men alien in race and language and thought, he had felt loneliness as he had never felt it in the wide spaces of the Sunderbans. There had been many nights when he had cried himself to sleep, sick with longing for the feel of his father's boat beneath him or the little corner in the hut on land that had been his. He shuddered as he thought of it. He had been so utterly alone. And then the work! The clanging of that insistent bell, that had dragged him from his sleep, that had cut short his midday meal, seemed to be always ringing in his brain like some hideous nightmare. Time after time he had started out of his sleep, thinking that he heard it calling him. How the others had cursed him for rousing them out of their sleep by his startled cries! And then the regular hours that made of him a slave, the ceaseless toil at which he might not pause, up and down the rows of bushes, an endless monotony, and over all the searching eye of the overseer who spotted with unerring instinct the smallest lapse from the set routine. All his life he had lived care-free, doing this or that as things came, with no set rules and no such thing as time, save dawn and noon, sunset and night. It had grown in him to so great a resentment that at last he had been unable to bear it and had run away. For two years he had laboured, a slave loathing his bonds. Then one pay day, with much money

tied tightly in his loin-cloth, he had fled and after much wandering had found the railway.

A swift gleam of anger passed over his face as his thoughts brought him thus far. If only he might get his hands upon that fat Babu's throat. It was not till afterwards that he had discovered how he had been swindled at the ticket office. For hours he had waited, watching passengers go past the little hole in the wall, buying their tickets. It had needed all his courage to follow them. He only knew of one place—Chittagong—and how much would be the ticket there? Had he enough to pay? The overseer had managed all these things on the journey up. He had no idea how much one of those little bits of cardboard cost, without which the other Babu at the entrance gate would not let one pass. It was long before he summed up courage to take his place at the end of a queue and face the little wired-in wicket in the wall. Tremblingly at last as the queue vanished he had come opposite to it and looking up through it had peered anxiously into the soft perspiring face of the great fat Babu who looked down at him contemptuously through large horn-rimmed spectacles from the other side. 'Chittagong,' he had murmured, trying to imitate the assurance of those who had gone ahead of him in the queue. Listening keenly he had noticed that they had merely mentioned the name of their destination and that the precious little bit of pasteboard had been immediately forthcoming. For a moment the fat-faced Babu had looked down at him in a way that made him shiver even now as he thought of it. Then he had mentioned a sum that nearly took Gopal Gain's breath away, and robbed him at one fell swoop of more than half his carefully hoarded wealth. It was only later in the train, gossiping with other passengers *en route* to Chittagong, that he discovered how scandalously that great fat Babu in the ticket office had defrauded him. The same fury of rage that had surged up in him then, swept over him again now. His hands clenched and there was murder in his eyes. For one brief moment he looked like some wild denizen of the forest about to spring. Slowly the paroxysm of fury passed, but deep down in his very soul the resentment remained. Some day, somehow, vengeance should be his.

The sun had fully risen. His father and brother were astir, the nets were cast and the daily round of life had begun again for Gopal Gain. At first he revelled in it, this glorious sense of freedom newly regained. No more the insistent clanging of the

bell, no more the stern taskmaster to ensure toil unremittingly, to mark the passing of each hour. He was free again, free to work much as he liked and when he liked, to lounge in the sunlight and smoke and sleep and eat. He could not have put it into speech, but in every fibre of his being he felt the joy of freedom. The nets had been spread across the entrance to the *khal* and they were heavy with fish swept into them with the ebb-tide. Hauling them in was mere child's play compared with the hard work of the last two years. There was no need for haste. They just pulled and rested and gossiped as they would. It was all a game. Cooking the midday meal, it was the same. Only when the sun had reached a certain place in the sky did he know by instinct it was noon. But what matter? There was nothing to be done during the long afternoon but mend the nets or lazily paddle the boat to another fishing ground. Day after day it would be the same, no undue haste, no strenuous labour, no fear. Many times in those first few days Gopal Gain stretched himself contentedly in the sunlight, revelling that he was free.

Then slowly as the days succeeded one another with their dead sameness, their unending monotony, a feeling of restlessness began again to stir within him. At first, so faint it was, it scarcely broke through his dull content. His brother's stupid acquiescence in the daily round, it was that seemed to irk him first, to rouse his opposition. There was only a year's difference in age between them, yet between them in all else there was a great gulf fixed. He wondered if his brother realised it too. He gave no sign. Gopal watching him go about his daily tasks felt that he had never resented them, never found them irksome, never desired with an absorbing irresistible desire to cast them from him. As he found life he took it. Why could not he, Gopal Gain, do likewise? Why was it that he was different from his brother and his father and a long line of men to whom discontent and restlessness had been unknown? As lying full length lazily in the boat, looking up through the branches overhead into the brilliant noon-day sky, he thought of these things, the old restlessness stirred within him. It was like some faint ripple on the clear glass-like surface of the great river at still water between tides. And slowly, but surely like an eddy it grew and engulfed him.

He was paddling the larger of his father's two boats alone up-stream, standing on the little raised platform in the bows and straining all his might against the great oar-rudder. His figure,

innocent of clothing save for the loin-cloth about his waist, stood out clear cut like an etching against the fading light. His rich brown skin, with the strong supple muscles standing out beneath, glowed with health and vitality. His head thrown back as he stepped backwards and forwards on the narrow platform, manipulating the great wooden thing that served as both oar and rudder, there was grace in every movement. It was this that appealed to him, the strenuous movement that kept thought at bay and that made him exult in his perfect physical fitness, in his manhood. There was no time to think. All that was in him went to the turning and twisting of that great oar-rudder. He gloried in the pitting of his strength against it, forcing it reluctant against the solid mass of swift-moving stream, to go which way he would. Without conscious thought, he moved to and fro, like some wondrous piece of perfect mechanism galvanised into life.

Suddenly round a bend in the river, flags flying fore and aft, gleaming white in the sunset, a thing of perfect swift-moving beauty, steamed the great Sahib's launch. There was no great width of river where they met and Gopal Gain needed all his strength and skill to bring his boat out of the path of this amazing craft that seemed to spurn the water, clearing its way through it by no visible means yet buoyantly and triumphantly passing onwards no matter whether it were ebb or flow. While he only moved his small boat slowly and by the sweat of his brow, this beautiful white thing, ten times the size of his, swept proudly by without an effort. To him it was *jadu*, a mystery he could not fathom, some wonder of the great white Sahibs, of whom he had caught but glimpses and who to him were far-off things like gods.

Safe out of the pathway of the launch, he rested on his oar and watched it speed smoothly on. It had but just passed him when he saw a Sahib come quickly out of the cabin and leaning over the railing scan the horizon eagerly. At a word of command the great launch that a moment before had been a thing of life slowed down obedient to it, and came almost to a halt. Gopal Gain watched fascinated. Then he saw why it had stopped and what the sudden excitement on board meant. A herd of deer that he, grown so accustomed to their presence, had not noticed, was grazing under the trees on the farther bank up-stream. A man on board the launch was running towards the Sahib with a rifle. The Sahib was levelling it against his shoulder. Gopal's keen eyes could see the herd of deer, suddenly aware of danger

as the launch glided slowly towards them, their heads flung high scenting the air. In the midst of the herd right at the water's edge stood the stag, a magnificent creature with great branching antlers, gazing outwards, half fearful, half defiant. Then even as he looked Gopal Gain heard a quick report and the great beast fell over lifeless while the rest of the startled herd dashed madly in among the trees. It was all so sudden, the quick stopping of the rapidly moving launch, the stirring of alarm amongst the herd, the sharp firing of the rifle and the swiftness of the death that laid the great stag low. Gopal Gain cowered against the rudder, his breath wellnigh driven out of him by the wonder of it all. A great fear gripped him. Death had come so swiftly. Yet at the same time there came to him a strange exaltation. To be able to deal out death at will like that! It was magnificent. The thought of it seized upon his dull imagination. He too must possess a gun. He must deal out death as the Sahib had done. The idea grew up in his untutored mind and became an obsession. This was the thing that he must do, this was the outlet to the vitality that was within him. For what reason he desired to deal out death his dull brain could not realise, but at the back of his mind he knew that there was a reason. He too must deal out death. Without a gun there could be no freedom.

For days he brooded, this one fixed idea uppermost in his thoughts. How could he possibly obtain a gun? He fingered the rupees in his loin-cloth. Were there enough there to buy one? At times the hopelessness of it almost overwhelmed him, yet with the curious sense of presentiment so often deep-seated in the primitive mind, he somehow knew that the thing he so passionately desired would one day be his.

He was at the *hât* again, idly watching his father bargaining, at his ease and at great length, for the sale of the produce he had brought. Turning suddenly, drawn by some force within him, he looked into the laughing eyes of a man beside him, a man standing as idly apart from the crowd as he. It was inevitable that they should speak. It was one of those sudden meetings when like faces like and the barriers of custom and convention are swept aside.

'It is ill buying to-day,' the man said with a laugh, 'the price of things soars up like a kite in full flight.'

Gopal Gain nodded. He had not been thinking of prices. They had never worried him. His father did the bargaining and provided for his scanty needs.

'I am not buying,' he said.

'Perchance you are a fortunate one and have things to sell,' pursued the man.

'No,' returned Gopal Gain dully, 'I have nothing to sell.'

The man laughed.

'Then wherefore here?'

Gopal Gain looked into the man's mocking face stupidly. There was something in it that fascinated him. The men of his own race and class were not given to much laughter. They were mostly heavy and sombre, wearied with the fight to live. Here was a man, unlike any other he had ever seen, but few years older than himself yet one whose care-free, light-hearted manner set him apart. Gopal's interest in him grew. He was aware he had not answered the man's question, yet somehow it seemed as if he needed no answer. He suddenly answered the question with another.

'And you?' he asked.

The man looked quickly over his shoulder. There was no one near. The whole *hât* was too intent on bargaining.

'There are other things than buying and selling,' he said quickly, watching the other out of his laughing eyes.

For a moment Gopal Gain looked into them questioningly. Then vaguely he understood.

The very spirit of adventure looked out of the man's smiling face. 'Fools work that other men may profit by it,' he said meaningly. Then as if he had said enough he moved away with studied carelessness.

Gopal Gain, his head awl with new and strange impressions, strode quickly after him.

'Tell me,' he said eagerly as he drew level with him.

The man laughed again, looking Gopal Gain straight between the eyes.

'I shall be here again next *hât* day,' he said slowly, and with that turned quickly and mingled with the crowd.

All the following week Gopal Gain lived in a fever of restlessness. What was it that the man had meant? Always he had the curious feeling that he at the same time understood and yet did not understand. His brain worked in circles. No thought came clearly save that at all costs he must be at the *hât* next market-day.

There he was again, standing idly apart from the crowd with the same half-mocking smile on his lips. He greeted Gopal with a laugh.

'So thou art coming with me,' he said.

Gopal gazed at him open-mouthed.

'Coming with you?' he repeated dully. 'Whither?'

For a moment the other hesitated, seeming to size up his man. Then the laughter died out of his eyes and with one swift glance round he leaned forward eagerly, his lips against Gopal Gain's ear.

'Two rifles are to be had for the taking,' he whispered. 'I need your help. One of them shall be yours.'

Something snapped suddenly in the dull brain of Gopal Gain. The one thing that he had so passionately wanted, the thought of which had become an obsession, was being offered him as a gift. His whole being reeled at the wonder of it. Henceforward he moved as in a dream. It seemed to him afterwards that from that moment events had moved with amazing swiftness on to their inevitable and appointed end.

Together they had moved off through the crowded *hât*. On the river bank, beyond the crowd of boats, one was moored apart. Lal Mia, for that was the name the stranger gave, got into it and without a further word on either side Gopal Gain followed. It never occurred to him to do otherwise or to question. It was his fate and he followed it. Hour after hour he sat silent paddling hard down-stream, through narrow *khals* and by-ways he knew not. Not once did Lal Mia turn and speak to him till daylight had almost faded and a mist had risen over the water. Then running the boat under an overhanging *sundri* tree he made it fast and turning his laughing eyes on Gopal Gain unfolded to him a tale that filled his dull, simple mind with amazement. Half a mile down-stream stood the Forest station, a rough wooden structure of wood, raised on piles, with mat walls and thatched with *gulpatta* leaves. Alone in the depths of the forest, it stood the one sign of human life, the one symbol of authority in this vast expanse that bore no other trace of the hand of man. And within it was the one thing that Lal Mia coveted above all else. Against the north wall, unprotected, under no lock and key, hung two rifles. To-night while all the world slept, they two, Lal Mia and Gopal Gain, cutting through the mat wall would enter the room and steal away with those same rifles. No thought of right or wrong so much as entered the mind of Gopal Gain. One of those rifles would be his. The wonder of that thought obsessed his mind to the exclusion of all others.

In spite of the excitement that gripped him, he dozed and started wide awake and dozed again as they waited. Only the sudden barking of a deer, short and frightened, broke in upon the long silence that brooded heavily over river and forest. With scarce a sound Lal Mia paddled the boat out into the stream and creeping along the farther bank they drew near the clearing in the forest, where standing out in the darkness they could see the thatched roof of the Forest Office. Exactly what happened in the next few minutes Gopal Gain could never afterwards remember clearly. But certain incidents stood out and haunted him in his dreams. A soft cutting sound ripped the silence. Lal Mia was forging with quick firm strokes a great hole in the mat wall. He himself was creeping through it. Ever afterwards he remembered how the pitch darkness inside gradually dissolved and he could see dimly. On a *charpoy* lay one huddled figure, while a second lay stretched on a mattress on the floor beside it. A great box, padlocked, a table covered with writing materials, an *almirah* against the wall and a broken chair grew dimly discernible. And then Lal Mia's finger pointing to the farther wall where the two rifles hung.

His hand was on the first rifle, about to lift it cautiously from the peg on which it hung, when his heart seemed suddenly to rise up in his throat and suffocate him. The figure on the *charpoy* had stirred. Gopal Gain stood as if transfixed, watching it move restlessly within the blanket that covered it from head to foot. If it awoke to life what would he do? All the vague terrors of the law surged up within him. Caught! It was impossible. Yet he was defenceless, with no weapon of defence or attack. A blind rage swept over him and his hands twitched as if they gripped the throat of the man stirring within the blanket. Then his eyes turned towards the hole in the wall, caught by the glitter of steel. His blood seemed to freeze within him. Lal Mia had drawn a great knife from his waistcloth and was crouched ready to spring. Gopal Gain almost screamed aloud in his terror. This was murder, the one offence for which the Sahibs inflicted death. In that brief moment he tasted fear as never in his life before.

Then suddenly the tension ceased. The stirring figure grew still and Gopal Gain breathed again. It was only the work of seconds to lift the rifles from the pegs on which they hung, to hand them out to Lal Mia and follow him silently down the steps. Breathlessly with never a word exchanged they had reached the

boat and taking the way of the tide were paddling swiftly downstream.

The days that followed were sheer delight to Gopal Gain. They were the happiest he had ever spent. This was the freedom he had sought, to roam the forest as he listed with this thing of wonder in his hands, this new-found friend of wood and steel that dealt out death and made of him a king. From the very first he had been attune with it. His aim had been sure. He would never forget his first shot. Lal Mia had produced a supply of ammunition hidden beneath the boards in his boat and together they had stalked a herd of deer. He had marked down a stag, and although the blood seemed to rush up into his head in his excitement and half-blind him as he fired, the great beast had fallen stone-dead. It had been a never-to-be-forgotten moment. And afterwards he had roamed the forest, ever seeking some fresh quarry for his aim.

Then once again as the days passed and he had shot down every kind of living thing that he could stalk or track, the old restlessness returned upon him. The lust of killing had gripped him and there was nothing new to kill. Why was it that he desired to kill? What was this madness of desire within him? Suddenly, one day as after a strenuous morning seeking for some new living thing worthy of his rifle, he had returned unsatisfied, to rest in the noonday heat, it came to him. There was one thing that he desired to kill above all others. How was it that he had so long forgotten? His fingers had always itched to get at the throat of that great fat Babu at the ticket office who had so shamelessly traded on his ignorance and robbed him of his hard-earned rupees. Now he had the means, this beautiful thing that breathed swift death. His primitive nature swayed by the passion of the moment, he leapt to his feet. He must start at once. Silent at most times he poured out a torrent of words that swept Lal Mia off his feet. He had helped Lal Mia. Now Lal Mia must help him. That evening he started on his quest.

It had been necessary to exchange his beloved rifle for a revolver that Lal Mia had produced from his hidden store of treasures below the floor of his boat, but that too had been a new delight to him, and he had found it as sure and obedient as the larger weapon. With it concealed about his person, he had after many days and nights of travel reached at last his journey's end. The fat Babu was still there, still handing out the little bits of paste-

board without which the Sahibs had decreed that none might travel. This time he joined the queue in front of the ticket office with no misgivings. This time he was in no doubt as to the result. He had never consciously thought out what he was going to do. He had made no plans. Some urge within him, stronger than himself, led him and he followed blindly.

There were only two in front of him now at the little hole in the wall. He fingered the revolver in the inner pocket of his coat and smiled. He was very confident. Last time the fat Babu had overawed him. This time it was his turn. He smiled again as he moved forward mechanically. The man immediately in front of him was having a slight altercation with the Babu, and Gopal Gain could hear the latter's strident bullying voice. He grasped the revolver more firmly and a fury of rage swept up again within him. It was small wonder that the contemptuous smile froze on the Babu's lips and that he fell back as if already shot as Gopal Gain's face appeared suddenly at the wicket and looked up at him. It was all over in a moment before anyone near by had realised that anything was happening. Gopal Gain had fired through the wicket and his aim had been as certain here as it had been with the wild things of the forest. He made no attempt to escape. It had never occurred to him to think what he should do after the deed which had so obsessed him had been done. His ignorant mind had carried him thus far and no farther. Dazed amidst the wild scene of confusion that followed his act, he suffered himself to be led quietly away. It was only when they searched him and he realised that they would rob him of his revolver, the thing that had become a very part of him, that he resisted, struggling madly like some wild animal at bay.

Overpowered at last, exhausted, he sank into a stupor from which nothing could rouse him. He refused to speak or to plead. The trial became a mere form. His brain could not grasp why he should be urged to plead 'Not guilty.' 'Extenuating circumstances' he did not understand. To the Court and the police he was a mystery. Why had he shot the ticket-office Babu? There was no evidence that he had ever seen him before and witnesses of the scene testified that no word was spoken between them on the fatal occasion. Yet that the deed had been done there could be no question, and the Medical Officer reported that the man was sane and knew the nature of his act. There was no loophole of escape. There could be but one verdict.

During the days that remained it was the same. Gopal Gain gave no sign that he understood the position. Even to the old Missionary who had spent fifty years toiling among such men as he and who visited him daily, he was a mystery. Nothing seemed to move him from the set dull despair that had descended upon him. Only from time to time he rose and throwing his arms above his head stretched himself to his furthest limits, his magnificent figure like some wild animal's resenting the cage that robbed it of its freedom. There was something about him that appealed strongly to the old Missionary. Day after day he put forth the utmost that was in him in his endeavour to bridge the gulf between them, and to bring to this man something of the peace that passes understanding which to himself was so real a thing.

It was the last evening and the old Missionary had read passage after passage from the greatest of all books, hoping that the beauty of the words or some special phrase might force its way into the dull bemused mind. Gopal Gain had scarcely listened, wondering as he had wondered each day why the old man came and why he read to him things out of a book that he could not even begin to understand. What was it all about? And then suddenly as the old Missionary closed the book on the very last sentence he was going to read to him, something at length seemed to penetrate straight into Gopal Gain's brain. 'Shall make you free.' That was always what he had dimly striven for. Freedom! He leapt to his feet with a cry, astonishing the old Missionary and bringing in the guard from the corridor in alarmed haste.

All night long the old Missionary sat with him. The brain of Gopal Gain seemed suddenly to have cleared and he understood, albeit but dimly and as a little child. As the dawn broke he walked out calmly and with confidence to meet the freedom he had so long sought.

PICTURE COLLECTING.

BY GODFREY LOCKER LAMPSON.

OF all the activities of the *virtuoso* the collection of pictures gives perhaps the most abiding and communicable pleasure. An assemblage of dead moths or fossil bones, a cabinet of ancient coins, a library of first editions, an album of postage stamps—what an interest each item in them afforded when it was acquired, what personal reminiscence attaches to every one, what expenditure of time, dexterity, energy or money they may represent, what research and experience, what *flair* and expertism! But it is not always easy to share your delight in them with strangers. They have to be extracted from cases, drawers, shelves, and strong rooms, to be explained and then returned whence they came. The greater part emerge but rarely from their resting-places and the most valued among them may appear to the uninitiated to have little or no significance. It is their owner's hobby, and we smile indulgently while he talks about them and waxes eloquent on the merits of the different specimens. He cannot communicate all the romance that he feels, that he knows to be there, and he puts his treasures back slightly disappointed.

It is different with pictures. The collector cannot keep their romance to himself unless no one enters the house. The beauty of a lovely picture sheds its glory or its charm upon every beholder and requires no explanation but itself. The whole household can share in it and every guest. It is a perpetual delight, giving lavishly to all and sundry, and at all times, the best of its qualities and the secret of its appeal. Its glow, warmth, form, colour, its movement and vitality, naturalness and sublimity, human interest and character, poetry and feeling—there they are upon the wall, inexhaustible, with a different message for each, awakening the chords of memory or love in all who gaze upon it. A collection of beautiful paintings, uncrowded, gathered with anxious thought and care, and perhaps at painful sacrifice, is one of the most covetable possessions a man may have, for the pleasure he can give his friends and other members of the public is beyond reckoning. A picture of fine quality requires no advertisement. Even if it

be the only one in a room—indeed then more than ever—it will turn drab surroundings into a focus of interest, and create a shrine for itself out of an environment wholly commonplace and insignificant. Such is the power of beauty to transform the common world!

In this connection a tale told me some years ago occurs to my mind, the story of a man to whom, late in life, romance first came, veiled in the guise . . . But here it is as it was related to me.

He was growing old and grey as a badger. Life was leaving him behind and at times he felt desperately sad. There are days in spring when in the stillness of the woods you can hear the sap rising in the oak-trees, loosening the bark that throughout the winter has clung to the stems like Nessus's shirt. It is a sound indescribable, a release, the faintest stirring, that cannot be located, but is about one everywhere. It was at such moments that he realised his age. There was no sap rising in his case to vitalise, to make his skin tingle. He was as arid as a wisp of last year's straw, rootless, discarded. Yet he was full of memories. That was the worst of it. If only he could stem the tide of memory, the pitiless Past that plucked at him with its zest and opportunities lost for ever, the Future would have no meaning for him either. It was Memory that was crucifying him when he thought of the years that stretched ahead.

What a voice that bird had, piping unseen in a tree near by! He was standing in Kensington Gardens peering into the branches, and the notes fell around him in a shower of ecstasy. He was listening to youth, eternal spring, eternal hope. An intolerable ache was in his heart. The past, the present, and the future fused into one and a terrible yearning took possession of him to be blotted out, to escape thought and pain for ever, to extinguish his personality for good and all. Then a calmer mood succeeded, and he sat on a chair watching the young couples, gay, serious, passionate. A little way off a man held a girl in his arms and their lips were pressed together. Love could give nothing better, and he turned away his head. It was sacrilege to spy upon them and he wanted to forget. Out of the past there rose visions of sweet faces that had passed him by, smiles, glances that he had mistaken for more than they meant, and some that had meant more than he thought; other forms, too, of dead ones who had prayed for him, watched over him, loved him. Gone for ever. All these ghosts crowded about him, infinitely remote, but haunting, in-

sistent. Evening had now gradually descended with its anodyne of peace; the rumble of the traffic seemed to have become fainter, and the mists floated up and veiled the beauty of leaf and stem as he turned home to supper.

And then another mood assailed him. Was it too late even now to snatch from the rags and dregs of life some shred, some savour of the romance that he had always dreamed of? He thought of instances of men he had known who had married or fallen in love. An old school-fellow had mated in early middle age, but his wife had died within a few years and the hearts of his children had hardened against him—a sort of Père Goriot in the making. Another case came to his mind, a man who had married a girl much younger than himself. To all outward appearances she had been a devoted helpmate and in the end had become his nurse, tending him in his last horrible illness, ministering to his wants, perfect in temper, solicitous in his hours of pain. But all the while she had had a secret lover and for years must have prayed and longed to be free. There was hardly a case he could think of that would tempt him to marry at his age, and not one he had ever come across that would lure him into an illicit union. Some of these were disgusting, others merely ridiculous, all of them in a short while unsatisfying, turning to ashes in the mouth. Was there anything more repulsive than an old satyr, or more ludicrous than a baldpate, infatuated with a minx young enough to be his granddaughter, and dancing attendance on her with stiff joints and rheumy eyes? He had seen both, and God help him to escape being either.

It was only the ideal of the brain that never faded, that kept its lustre till the throes of death, that remained pure and undefiled—some form conjured up by the spirit, some image of the imagination, fleshless, intangible, but permanent and real. That is why he liked to turn into a Cathôlic church he knew of and gaze at the saintly figure of a Madonna in a stained-glass window. For she represented a real woman, some model of the artist's, but idealised, many years ago. She sat enthroned beneath a canopy, holding the divine child and looking into the little chapel, serene and inscrutable. He would stand there, indifferent to dogma and tradition, to Church and creed, but absorbed into this ideal of womanhood, until he was in love with the dream and would kneel down in worship. There he would remain, steeped in the benediction that seemed to flow from the sacred figure, with the glowing colours

of the window playing about his head and shoulders, until the chapel gradually darkened with the shadows of the dying day and the face of his beloved was lost to view. How his colleagues in the Department, for he was a civil servant, would laugh among themselves if they knew! Jests would be bandied about and it would be hinted as to what he really stood in need of. So he visited his sanctuary in secret, and slipped away from it, as he hoped, unseen.

One companion, however, he had found of a different and more congenial stamp to whose lodgings he sometimes went, an artist who extracted a slender competence from the illustration of books. On several occasions they had visited the premises of a famous firm of auctioneers and looked at the pictures hanging up for sale. On the last occasion the different lots were being placed in position for the first day's view and they were the only members of the public present. Leaning against a wall, awaiting its turn, was a panel by a Florentine master, in an old frame and a wonderful state of preservation. It represented the Magdalen, standing alone, with eyes downcast and clasping a box of precious ointment in her hands. The title of the picture was a matter of indifference to him, but our friend knew from this moment that he had found at last the woman of his soul's desire. Her hair was of gold, her face pale, her whole form beautiful. But it was not the physical part of her that drew him out of himself. It was the subtle distinction of her countenance, the sweet, sad seriousness, mingled with infinite tenderness and knowledge, that stirred him to his depths and made him her slave. The Madonna of the chapel had been a goddess, visited but rarely, inaccessible, supernatural, sublime. But here was a woman, a mortal who had lived and suffered, the genuine portrait without doubt of some dead Florentine, in whose face there dwelt all that he had ever dreamed of when he thought of his ideal, a being superior to Earth, yet of flesh and blood, subject to the laws that govern sex, but remote from pollution, pure, but comprehending, unapproachable by sin. He halted in front of her for a moment or two, made but little comment to his companion, and after a short while found some excuse and departed home.

The following morning he returned and mingled with those who were studying the exhibits. The sale was to take place in four days' time and, the standard being high, big prices were expected. The Magdalen was hanging in a corner, fortunately

not in one of the most conspicuous positions. He strolled slowly down the line, stopping automatically with unseeing eyes opposite several masterpieces until he reached her. He was afraid to linger too long, lest others might notice his interest and mark her down for their own. There she stood as on the day before, but even more lovely, more arresting, in her appointed place upon the wall for every eye to see. He passed on and came back, and yet again, and yet once more, and then left the building in a maze of emotional unrest, unconscious of the traffic that swirled about him. Who was he that he should dream of such a thing—a civil servant with a meagre salary and a private income of insignificant dimensions? The picture might run into thousands. There was hardly any figure it might not reach. It was absurd on the face of it, nay presumptuous, to contemplate its purchase, and he told himself that he was a fool and had best keep away. A thousand pounds, even if he could borrow it, would cripple him for several years. The next day, however, he went again. There she was still and a couple of men with hooked noses were examining the picture through magnifying glasses. He heard one of them say—'A school-picture'—and they turned aside. The remark conveyed nothing to him, and the next moment a woman in sables came along with her husband and went into raptures over it. He wandered through the rooms, and returned to the irresistible lure of the beautiful face over and over again. He could not bear that it should be looked at, nor again that it should be passed over. The following morning saw him there once more. It was the day before the sale and the place was crowded. Three Jewish-looking men in soft hats, dealers by their mien, were scrutinising the back of the panel. They then condescended to turn their attention to the front, and one of them actually moistened his finger and rubbed it over a corner of the paint, then shook his head and they passed on. But some of the smarter visitors were enthusiastic in their praise, especially a man with a large white cravat who gave his opinion in a loud, confident voice. Would he never stop praising it? The whole room would hear, and our friend walked away to the opposite corner and anxiously watched the drama from afar.

He slept but little that night. A fever of excitement kept him awake. The evening before he had been through his accounts. What would the picture go for? It might fetch five thousand. Even if it sold for as little as a thousand pounds, could he possibly afford it? If he borrowed the money, how long would it take

him to pay it back and, moreover, would anyone lend it? On the morning of the sale he visited the bank and after a good deal of parleying arranged for a loan for that amount, repayable over a period of two years. He had also made up his mind, if necessary, to take cheaper lodgings. He would cut down his theatres, his meals, his taxis, his tailor's bills, all the unnecessary expenses that he could do without. Would it not be a sufficient reward, even if half-starved, to gaze upon this wondrous face upon his own wall, not sharing its beauty with anyone, a sacred personal possession that he could treasure all his days and return to after the drab routine of the office to feast upon with adoring eyes?

The moment of the sale was at hand and he stood on the outside of the crowd. He had purposely given no commission, as he was afraid to trust to another party and intended to bid on his own account. He was almost sick with anxiety. The picture had disappeared from view and was stacked somewhere behind a curtain with the other lots. The number was 93. How slowly the sale proceeded! It seemed to him that there was a tension, some kind of expectancy among the crowd, as though they were waiting for the anagnorisis, the climax of a play. The hard voice of the auctioneer kept on announcing the bids. It was a sacrilege that his Beloved should be made the object of such a callous and public deal. Lot 90 had been slowly disposed of. Would the strain never be relaxed? He dared not scan the catalogue, for someone might guess his intentions and bid against him. Lot 92 had at length fallen under the hammer and the attendants were placing the Magdalen upon the high easel. How could anyone refrain from bidding for such a face? One dealer got up from his chair and looked at her unconcernedly. Then the auctioneer spoke. 'Lot 93—how much for it? Someone start it. Fifty guineas for it to begin with? Forty guineas? Thirty guineas? Twenty guineas for it? Twenty guineas offered for it.' By fives, tens and twenties the bidding reached two hundred guineas and then slackened. At this point our friend held up his hand. The auctioneer did not see him at first, but he waved his catalogue frantically and caught the great man's eye. Bit by bit the price crept up to three hundred guineas and then there was another pause. Our friend had made the last bid and the incredible fact began to dawn upon him that the picture might become his property after all. Then his opponent started bidding again, and the price went to three hundred and fifty. After this there came another

lull. His rival then bid once more, and once again our friend nodded his head. No further bids were forthcoming, and trembling from head to foot he heard the hammer fall, and the lot was his. He was in a state bordering on stupefaction. For just over four hundred pounds he had secured this prize which in normal conditions he and all those who knew his circumstances would have regarded as utterly beyond his reach. It would take him a year to refund the borrowed money and entail sacrifices, that each day would be brought home to him, of comforts and luxuries he had long become used to.

After the sale he wrote out a cheque and carried the panel down the stairs into the street. Was not this the culminating moment of his life, for he was bearing in his arms the goddess of his dreams for whom he had been prepared to risk so much? That same evening he hung the picture in his sitting-room and stood in front of it for a long spell, gazing at it with ecstasy and drinking in its beauty in a rapture of reverence. He could hardly believe his fortune. The woman of his ideal was his at last and his alone till death parted them. What greater than this had the gods to offer? His love for her was incorruptible, his passion pure. No carnal thought would ever tarnish their union, for he could never ask what she could never grant. It had been love at first sight that would retain its first wonder and fragrance and all the mystery of a miracle through the coming years.

But, oh, ye pitiless Fates that spin the destinies of mortal man! A week later and our friend was no more. He had caught a chill on that memorable December afternoon, quitting the hot atmosphere of the sale room for the rigour of the wintry street, and pneumonia had set in. They buried him by the parish church in a snowstorm. A distant relative, a representative from the Department, and the artist were the only mourners present, and when the earth had covered him up he quietly slipped from the memory of men. As for the picture, it was put up to auction again to pay for his debts and fetched two hundred pounds, passing this time into the hands of a dealer, who hung it in his window for customers to see. Alas, poor Yorick!

The collecting of pictures, however, is not often as tragical as this. It has its absorbing and exciting moments, its desperate and fevered ventures, its harrowing disappointments and its triumphs, but its comical occasions too. I remember visiting a small provincial town with a friend a couple of summers since in the slender

hope of making a find in the antique-dealers' shops there. One of them I entered, a dark and dingy series of dens which looked as though for many months they had remained undusted and unswept. From the innermost of these chambers, hearing my footstep, emerged a seedy individual with shambling gait. His upper lip was adorned with a huge drooping moustache and long upper canine teeth gleamed behind it. His eyes were small, his body large and sack-like, and his legs stumpy. I asked him if he had got any old paintings. My expectations were not unduly high, for on looking round I could see nothing of any consequence upon the walls. However, he said that he possessed an interesting old master, a very old master indeed, a valuable piece which he had acquired the week before from a private gentleman, if I would care to see it. He had shown it to no one as yet and indeed had half a mind to keep it and not sell it at all. He went to fetch it from the rear of the premises, and, while waiting, I wondered to myself what manner of canvas or panel it would turn out to be. Would it be a lost Leonardo or perhaps a Vermeer? I heard his slow returning shuffle and held my breath. It was a picture of fair size and in a heavy frame, and it was as much as he could do to get it through the door. When he turned it round, however, the disillusionment was complete, being a wretched daub of grimacing cherubim, with a hole in the canvas in one corner and extremely dirty. To hear what he would say, I asked him whom it was by. He replied that it was painted by a well-known master whose name had slipped him for the moment. I pretended to admire it. Could he not recollect the name? No, he could not, although it was the name of a celebrated artist. He would guarantee that. I said I thought I recognised the style. It was Italian, was it not? Yes, he said, it was by a very old Italian master, a famous one. I think I have got it, I said; was it not by Walrus? Yes, he replied, that was the name; he remembered now, a rare Italian master. There were very few of his works about. My friend and I had to effect a right-about turn on the instant, or he would have marked our convulsed features. Muttering inarticulately and then making the excuse that I had caught sight of a passing friend, I escaped into the street. So the picture was baptised that afternoon and sold perhaps by Walrus a little later, on the strength of this attribution by 'a distinguished connoisseur.'

Romance, interest, fun, can thus be got from the collection of

pictures. Yet what training it demands to be able to discriminate between the good and the bad ! Set a millionaire to collect them who has made no study of schools and technique, but buys what he likes without competent advice, and the result probably will be nearly worthless, of no permanent value to himself or anyone else. His house will be full of inferior copies, of insipid compositions by third-rate artists, of shameless forgeries, and paintings restored out of all recognition. If he puts them up to auction he will quickly realise how bad an investment a hobby can be, and if he be a man with any natural good taste, he will get tired of looking at them on his walls. They will soon cease to be company and bore him by their presence. This is the real test of a good picture—to be able to live with it with pleasure ; to grow fonder of it as the months go by ; to discover ever newer beauties that were undiscerned before ; to look at it and hate to part with it ; if something has to be sold, to leave it to the last ; and, if absent from it for any length of time, to greet it on return like a loved and trusted friend. A worthless picture can never satisfy like this. It grows worse with the years, until eventually the eyes avoid it automatically and it is treated merely as a piece of furniture. But a fine painting is like a fine book which can be read again and many times, though every page is quite familiar ; for the emotions experienced on first perusal can be recalled to life, with all the additional fragrance of old friendship, whenever its leaves are turned afresh.

DISENCHANTMENT.

Ah, Vera de Vere—or whatever
 Your last matrimonial name
 (Or cinema title—one never
 Can tell if the two are the same)—
 No matter: howe'er you were christened,
 Your loveliness made me rejoice;
 You were mute: but, enraptured, I listened,
 In mind, to your voice.

How I hung, day by day, on each gesture,
 Each beauty of figure and face,
 Each movement, inadequate vesture—
 Came early, was last in my place!
 How I wished it were *I* that could kiss you,
 Could hear you admit you were *mine*!
 Thought, what exquisite accents must issue
 From lips so divine!

Though you'd wedded with six or with seven—
 Ev'n more in a season had kissed—
 I thought to myself, 'Oh, what Heaven
 To be added awhile to the list!'
 And I thought, were it ever so fated
 That I happened to be on the spot,
 And you for the moment unmated,
 That—I'd have a shot!

Then, one day:—had a dog started barking?
 Was it Punch—or his Judy—one heard?
 Or Jazz? or just somebody—'talking'?
 To connect it with *you* seemed absurd:
 And I, your potential next lover,
 Leapt up from my seat at a bound;
 Looked this way and that to discover
 The source of the sound.

Was it *you*? Someone surely had blundered:
 Your lips didn't move in accord.
 No, it *couldn't* be you! Still, one wondered.
 That voice! Oh, my vision adored!
 Yes, it *was* you!—And, presto, were banished
 All ambitions of joining your team!
 Gone the grace and the magic! Evanesced
 The Heav'n of my dream!

C. H. ST. L. RUSSELL.

A TALE OF TAILS.

BY C. S. DURST.

AT the door of his house in the shade of a wide-spreading durien tree sat Haji Bakar and taught his grandson the wisdom of Allah. And the grandson in the wisdom of childhood played with the cat at his feet, while Haji Bakar talked. And the child stroked the cat from his striped head down to his knotted tail, for the cat had, in the manner of his father and grandfather before, a twisted loop in his tail, as is the way with all true Malay cats.

Then Haji Bakar spoke and said to his grandson, 'Know you why the cat's tail is curled?'

And the boy looked up with his round wondering eyes, the black eyes of the Malay, and said, 'No, why should it not be curled?'

And the old man sitting there by the door of his house, told a tale of the wisdom of Allah:—

When the world was very young, Tuan Allah made all the beasts of the earth; he made them all very straight and true; and in his wisdom he gave them each two eyes to see by and two ears to hear by and a nose to smell by, that they might not be caught unawares by their foes. And he gave them four legs to run with and a mouth to eat with, that they might gain their food and live, and in his very great wisdom he gave each a tail.

And when Tuan Allah had given all these gifts, there was a difference of opinion among the animals of the earth as to the use of the tail, for some said thus and some thus.

Then Tuan Allah in his very great wisdom spake to all the animals of the earth and his voice was like the sound of the rivers roaring in flood.

'Scatter upon the face of the earth,' he said, 'for the space of one moon; so shall ye learn the use of the tail. And when ye have learnt, return to me that I may know what ye have found.'

Then all the animals of the earth dispersed each to his proper place.

The elephants climbed on the mountains and abode in the depths of the forest. And they drank of the clear rushing rivers and ate of the leaves of the trees. And they pondered the wisdom of Allah to find out the use of the tail.

And the buffaloes served their master and dragged timber down from the jungle. And they slabbed their blue sides with the cool mud and wallowed deep down in the pools. And they thought of the wisdom of Allah for what purpose he gave them a tail.

And the monkeys ran up to the tree-tops and swung from the uppermost branches, and chattered out over the jungle, and argued from hill-top to hill-top, how great was the wisdom of Allah that gave the wise monkeys their tails.

And the bears lolloped into the forest and climbed trees in search of sweet honey, and ate and slept deep through the noontide and drowsed through the late afternoon, and thought not of the wisdom of Allah for what purpose he gave them a tail.

And the cats travelled down to the village and drank of the milk that man gave them, and basked in the warmth of the sunlight and played with the children of their masters, and purred of the wisdom of Allah, who had given all animals their tails.

And when the moon was once more full all the animals of the earth assembled before Tuan Allah, all but the elephants and they were pondering so deeply the words of Allah that time was not to them. (For the elephant, my grandson, lives more slowly than any animal and to him a month is but as a day.)

Tuan Allah looked round on all the animals and he said in a voice as though all the winds of heaven were rustling through the jungle : 'Have ye considered my wisdom, O servants, have ye found out the use of the tail ?'

Then he asked the father of all buffaloes and said, 'What use have you found in your labours ?'

And the father of all buffaloes answered, 'Tuan Allah, when our labour is ended and we browse in the shade on the padang, there are flies that dance in the sunlight and settle and tickle our flanks, these can we drive off with our tails.'

Then Tuan Allah spake again and said, 'Well have you done, my blue buffalo, on the tip of your tail hair shall grow that you may brush off the flies the more easily.' And he turned to the bears and he said, 'What use have you found for your tails ?'

Then the father of all the little brown bears trembled in his heart and he spoke slowly :

'Tuan Allah, I forgot your commandments and I sought wild honey instead. I still know no use for my tail.'

Then was Tuan Allah very angry with the little brown bears and said :

'Since you disobeyed my commandments and have not remembered my wisdom, your tails shall be taken from off you, you shall go bare before all the animals.'

And he turned to the monkeys and asked them, and the father of monkeys replied :

'When we swing with our legs on our tree roads and hang 'twixt the earth and the heaven, we can steady ourselves with our tails, and we thank thee for this, Tuan Allah.'

And Tuan Allah replied :

'For this shall your tails be the stronger. You shall hold with them wrapt round the branches.'

While he spoke there was noise in the jungle and trees crashed with a hurry of coming. And the elephants burst through the thickets and the father of elephants said :

'Tuan Allah, we pondered thy wisdom and to us the months are as days.'

And Tuan Allah asked, 'What have you learned in your pondering ? What use have you found for your tails ?'

And the father of elephants replied :

'When we eat of the leaves of the forest we must crane up our necks to reach them. We pray thee to make our tails longer that with them we may pull the leaves down.'

Then Tuan Allah was very pleased and blessed the elephants and said :

'Because you have wisdom, my elephants, I will give you a new kind of tail. With it you shall pull down the branches and suck up the cool rushing water, and you shall be lords of the jungle and rule it because of your wisdom.'

And last of all Tuan Allah looked round and he saw the cats and he said : 'For what purpose have you used your tails ?'

And the father of all cats replied :

'Our tail is for beauty, Tuan Allah ; we carry it straight up behind us, then all men admire our sleekness and give us sweet milk for our drink.'

And Tuan Allah laughed with a smile that made wrinkles around his eyes and in his beard, and said, "So be it, but when pride is humbled you shall come back to me in your sorrow.'

Then were all the beasts of the earth dispersed through the mountains and the forests and the habitations of man.

After many moons the father of all cats sought once more the presence of Tuan Allah.

And Tuan Allah saw him coming a long way off and he smiled and said to him :

‘ O father of all cats, why have you come to me again ? ’

And the father of all cats replied :

‘ Tuan Allah, I have come for a favour to ask thee to grant me a boon. For there came to the village of humans, where I drink of the milk that men give me, an old man clad in rags and grey-headed, and he lodged in the house of my master. He was holy and all men gave hearing to the words that he uttered in wisdom. And he prayed every morning and at even he spread out his mat and knelt down.

‘ And it happened one day as the sun set and the hills turned from blood into gold, that he kneeled in the porch of the doorway and prayed. And I was out walking and proudly I carried my tail o’er my head, and I wished to enter the doorway but could not because he was there. Tuan Allah, in the pride of my walking I would not be baulked of my purpose but pushed past that holy man praying and had no respect for his prayers. Then the holy man woke from his musings and he laid out his hand on my tail and threw me out into the garden and cursed me for disturbing his prayers.

‘ So I sat till his prayers were all ended and he rose up again from his knees. Then I crept to him lowly and humbly ; and I said to him, “ O holy prophet, I have sinned and I ask for your pardon.” Then he stroked me and gave me his pardon. But I vowed that to show I was humble I would seek thee and ask thee this boon, that for ever I wear my tail twisted, so if I should sin once again, the prophet can slip in his finger and throw me from out of the door.’

Then Tuan Allah in his exceeding great wisdom laughed once more and said, ‘ So be it, O father of cats, from henceforth your tail shall be twisted in a loop for the holy man’s finger, and for ever it shall be a symbol that your pride has become your humility, and so shall your children and grandchildren bear this sign of what Allah has done.’

And that, O my grandson, is why the cat’s tail is looped.

AN EXPEDITION TO TOKAY.

BY STEPHEN GWYNN.

TOKAY was an afterthought. For years I had wanted to know something of the country to which my friends in Hungary belonged; but its picturesque associations summed themselves up for me in one name, Budapest.

When I left Vienna at eight on a foggy September morning, it seemed indeed as if I had passed through misty curtains into an unknown Europe. I was travelling down the Danube, of course: the prospect of arriving by water after land-travel across half a continent should tempt anyone; and journeying by river gives the feel of new surroundings as one can never get it from a train. The strangeness lay largely in the monotony; league after league, hour after hour, nothing to be seen but the grey-green stream hemmed in between stone dykes and banks lined with grey-green willows; hemmed in, yet not confined strictly; it is too big for anything but persuasion to flow in one course. Here and there was a glimpse of the higher embankment two or three miles away, which fences the cultivable plains. Along the banks was no sign of cultivation, though at intervals wide tracts had been reclaimed and solidified to pasture; every now and then we passed a couple of hundred cattle down on the water's edge at some drinking place, often a mob of horses drinking there too. Often the dyke would be dotted with cabins of fishermen, each having a dip-net swung out from a projecting beam and worked by winch and cable; but there was no habitation except where by rare exception the flat bank rose to a hillock, and a village would be there. There was nothing strange about the houses; but the crane wells which one saw wherever there were fields reclaimed suggested Egypt rather than anything I knew in Europe; and the floating mills, each with its wheel set between two anchored barges, were a totally new sight. I am told they are found only where you find the Turanian stock to which Hungarians belong.

Tugs passed us, trailing each a tow of four great barges up this international waterway. Bridges spanned it with four or five arches, each arch carrying about a hundred yards of road; but bridges were ten or fifteen miles apart. One was at Bratislava,

which used to be Pressburg and Hungarian; now the Czechs own it and its castle, built by Maria Theresa. Czech women came on board, with short stiff bright-coloured petticoats standing out like a crinoline. Opposite here began the new Hungarian frontier and a little way from it a battalion of Hungarian infantry was encamped; along the bank was moored a large supply of pontoons. When two not friendly peoples are divided from each other by a river, they will practise the means of getting across it.

About sunset, we drew into a different region; the river that had been flowing eastward among marshes curved southward through a gap between low mountains, and the great church of Esztergom, Hungary's primatial city, rose up among the bastions of an old fortress dominating the water-passage from a height. Then dark closed in, we went to dinner, and by the time it was over, a long line of twinkling lights showed us where Buda was.

We drew abreast of them and they lengthened out; St. Margaret's island masked them for nearly a mile, and we seemed to have overshot the town when suddenly we passed under a great bridge, and the central curve of the high amphitheatre which faces the Danube here was disclosed. It was like a stage scene. All Buda's principal buildings were flooded with illumination by reflectors: St. Anne's Church by the water's edge; above it on the height, St. Matthew's Cathedral, the Coronation Church and the terraced battlements enclosing them; away to the left, on the southern hill, St. Gellert's colossal statue; while high on top of all, the old citadel that has been left a ruin since it was won back from the Turks in 1685 crowned the hill with shining battlements.

I had expected something from my first sight of Buda. To come in by railway is to enter by the back door, through squalid passages; a river, if the town is nobly planned, brings you to the main entrance. But I had never seen any town bedeck itself like Budapest. Here the municipality does for the whole city, with a concerted artistic plan, what London leaves to a few shopkeepers in isolated quarters, as part of their advertising programme. That was my first realisation how town-proud the Hungarians of the capital are, and how amazingly their site lends itself to decorative treatment.

But next day and every day for a week I went out to look in Budapest for some expression of the Hungarian people, and I could not find it. I had expected a small picturesque and perhaps rather untidy city with a medieval atmosphere; I found a modern most capably appointed town of more than a million people, full

of handsome public buildings, but owning little beauty, except what its site bestows. Some of the old streets in Buda had a distinction of their own, in an eighteenth-century style; individual houses and their courtyards were welcoming and delightful. But Budapest as a whole—and Pesth, the newer, on the left bank even more than Buda on the right—had nothing intimate in it, no charm, no special appeal. It is perhaps a Hungarian city built when the ruling power was not Hungarian; perhaps simply the city of a people whose genius does not express itself in architecture; but at all events it was so like to any other city of Western Europe that it bewildered me to see on every shop-door and at every street-corner words that had no relation to an ordinary Western European's linguistic outfit.

Take a single case: I saw the word *Dohany* written up so often that I asked its meaning, and found that it was Hungarian for what the rest of Europe, from Scandinavia to Sicily and from Moscow to Madrid, knows (under some easily recognisable variant) as tobacco.

A country whose language is so formidably individual must have a great deal more distinctive character than I could find in Budapest; and that is why I determined, being in Hungary, to push on to Tokay; knowing by experience of other wine-growing lands how deeply the roots of this venerable industry penetrate into the national life. Also, to see Tokay, I must see, if only in passing, something of the Hungary which is not a creation of the last hundred and fifty years.

My project did not get much encouragement from the Hungarians whom I met. One was even a director of a company which controls some of Tokay's most famous vineyards; but he had never been to Tokay, nor thought of going there. My host had been a wine-grower himself, but in Transylvania, and his vineyards, like the rest of his estate, had been taken from him by the Roumanian government and paid for in a fantastically depreciated currency. He was a 'Hungarian optant' and in choosing to remain Hungarian he had been obliged to sacrifice what was his country as much as a Scotchman's country is Scotland, or an Irishman's is Ireland. He knew no more of north-east Hungary, where the Tokay grape is grown, than an uprooted Kerry land-owner knows of Norfolk. He did know, however, that Tokay was a long journey distant, and that we could not possibly get lodgings in the place suitable for his lady who was to come and be our interpreter. Between him and the Director of the company,

a scheme evolved, under which we were to mobilise the services either of the Lord Lieutenant of the county, or of a Prince who owned the vineyards, or of both. Fifty years ago it would have seemed quite natural to me that any party of reasonable credit, wishing to visit Donegal, should be launched on the general hospitality of the countryside; and all through Hungary the lack of hotels is still made up for in this manner. So, I was willing to be so forwarded; but a simpler plan disclosed itself. The official *Ampelologia*, or Hungarian Institute of Winegrowing, was to escort a party of Austrian vineyard inspectors and winegrowers round the Tokay region. I begged for leave to join, and was granted it. So, before seven o'clock on a fine September morning, we were in a string of some eighteen persons whom the Herr Ober-Direktor, wearing four medals in his buttonhole, shepherded with encouraging cries and swift overhand beckoning gestures (as if he bowed an imaginary ball before us), towards the train for Sverenez.

We were a party under official auspices, but paying our own way—at reduced fares, it is true, but still paying; so we travelled third-class and tightly packed. But there was breakfast at once, in a perfectly appointed restaurant car (between London and Vienna I met no such finished service), and we were allowed to stay where we had breakfasted. Here for nearly four hours we studied the landscape, while others of the party with exemplary promptitude began their study of the wines.

This landscape in its wholly different way was no less strange to me than the banks of the Danube. The great plain stretches south from Budapest; we travelled north-east and there were undulations of the ground and sometimes even hills on the horizon; yet most of the time a level furrow five miles long could have been driven out from either side of the rails. The wheat crop was harvested, of course, and where it had been, all was ploughed land, dark, rich, and, even after long drought, glossy with its own sap—*uligine glebae*. Its harvest was stacked in hills of corn, cruciform like churches, sometimes with two or three transepts built off one side of the main rick. The maize was still standing, parched like dry reeds, and the long oblong strips in which it grew were bordered with sunflowers. Their heads hung now, heavy with the seeds that would be pressed for oil, and so transformed into cattle food; but in summer these plains must be a wonder with rank after rank of great golden faces following the sun as he wheels.

About the houses were fields strewn with yellow pumpkins

and green water-melon, or red with tomatoes ; there were little garden patches of red and green pepper, growing on plants like French beans. Yet despite these bright splashes, the landscape was strange to me by its lack of contrast. Sun seemed to suck the colour out of land and sky, tree and herbage, till even the woods were only blurs of greyish green. Not here the vivid green, the purples, the golden olives and the clear blues and whites that I should see from an Irish train.

We passed through Mesökövesd, a town to which people make excursions from Budapest every Sunday to see the villagers turn out in their traditional costumes ; but on a weekday all was normal ; yet at the next station I saw a couple of women in crude pink blouses with short petunia-coloured petticoats standing stiffly out. They were like figures from a pack of cards, and somehow to me not quite real. But when we passed a military training ground, and a squad of men in fatigue dress were seen riding across one of the wide dun-coloured expanses, that was Hungary ; and later, when we saw a herd-boy with a herd of lank grey pigs mustered close about him in the stubble, that also was Hungary and no mistake. So were the immensely long-horned oxen, everywhere used for draught ; though the milch cows here and elsewhere were of Swiss breed, coloured like the rind of a Camembert cheese.

After three hours we gradually drew towards a line of hills, and Sverencz was in the plain below them. Here we found the promised autobus, which resolved itself into a large lorry with canvas cover sheltering a rough arrangement of benches ; the sort of lift one was very glad to get behind the lines in wartime. Our Ober-Direktor apologised for its simplicity and begged that we should take it as a good joke—which the party showed perfect readiness to do. If the road bumped us, at least there were frequent rests ; every five minutes we halted, our guide descended, clapped his hands imperatively, called 'Allo !' and began to dissertate. The hills spread east of us and south of us ; they were plainly volcanic, and to the east one flattened cone recalled the shape of a tent ; to the south, another had the same outline ; and we were taught that all this wine-bearing district lay 'between Tent and Tent.' We went on southwards, the road just skirting the hills, so that all the vineyards, or all but all, lay on our left, *à flanc de coteau* ; here, as on the Côte d'Or, what grows on the level land is of little value ; the choice vintages come from shallow soil close up against mere goat pasture. We turned up into the

hills, and came to the homestead which is the headquarters of the State wine-farm; its superintendent received us in the open, led us to where a large contour map was set up under trees, and began his lecture, with illustrations. We were shown specimens of the two types of grape from which the Tokay wine is made; the muscat, solid in cluster, the other hanging long and loose with slightly larger berries. About ten per cent. of the whole vineyards are under muscat grapes, and this wine is kept apart, and there is no blending. Nor is anything exported from Tokay but what is grown in the region. It is even forbidden by law to bring into it wine from any other country or district.

So far all was plain sailing; but the difficulties began when we were told by what special process Tokay is made. It differs from other wines in this, that the vintage is deferred very late, till the end of October, so that in a lucky year the fully ripened grapes are touched at night by frost. These grapes, now shrivelled on the stalk like raisins, are picked off, not bunch by bunch, but berry by berry, and thrown into wooden hods which a man carries slung on him—each capable of holding twenty-four litres of liquid. Meanwhile such grapes as are not shrivelled are pressed in the ordinary way, and the must (the unfermented juice) is retained. The dry grapes are then pressed to a pulp, which is thrown into a large barrel holding 130 litres. Two hods, three, four, or five, of these raisin-dry grapes may be put in, and the barrel is then filled up with must from the unshrivelled fruit. The larger the proportion of shrivelled grapes, the stronger the wine; the label of Tokay tells not only the year of vintage but the number of hods put in. All wine thus made is called 'Aszu'—and is what we in these islands think of when we name Tokay.

But a great deal of wine is made every year in Tokay in the ordinary fashion from all the grapes simply pressed together and normally fermented. This is called Szamorodni, and does not differ very greatly from the other ordinary wines made in different parts of Hungary. Its somewhat musky individual flavour may please, or may not. But it was a new idea to me that Tokay as drunk and valued in Hungary may differ inordinately from our conception of what Tokay should be. This I perceived, when after the lecture we sat down to an open-air collation, of sandwiches, grapes—and Tokay. We began with last year's growth—very pleasant drinking; then came a second glass (or it might be a third, fourth or fifth according as each one had dealt with

the bottles set before him) of a wine that was definitely sharp; after that a third, still more reputed; but I should have called it harsh—and it was certainly no temptation to me.

It did however recall to me a wine of the Jura, grown at Château Chalon and known everywhere as *Vin de Garde*, which is always bottled in odd-shaped bottles, because there is a tradition that the vines there were brought in the Middle Ages from Tokay. If you wish to know what Szamorodni Tokay is like, you can go to Château Chalon, and should the wine not recompense you, the place will.

By the time I had reached these conclusions, half the party had left the luncheon table, and an Austrian professor of viticulture was catechising the little keen-faced Hungarian expert who had met us with the lorry. Already on the drive this pleasant young man had been forced to call in my Hungarian friend as interpreter; and now he was looking about him forlornly and murmuring, 'But where is the gracious lady?' So we summoned the gracious lady, who could be as gracious and easy in French, English or German as in her native Hungarian. With her aid, we beat out the detail of making 'Aszu' Tokay; and then the party, definitely more hilarious than when it arrived, went on to Tarza, where are the cellars of the Royal Vineyards.

Hungary knows nothing of 'Imperial' Tokay; it has indeed no use for anything 'imperial.' But Hungary, which fought against the Hapsburgs for generations, accepted the Hapsburgs for its kings after 1848; and now, being completely free, Hungary still chooses to hold the idea of kingship. It is a detail that the vast palace in Budapest stands empty and unilluminated when the other buildings are lit up: this only means that Hungary has not yet decided which Hapsburg to select; but some evening that vast front of building will be a blaze of light. Meanwhile, whereas in Austria itself, and in Czecho-Slovakia, the property of the Hapsburgs has been confiscated, in Hungary the Hapsburgs still keep what they owned; the royal vineyards are still royal. If the wine had a right to be called Imperial, it was because Tokay from the royal demesne was brought in casks to Vienna and there matured and bottled in the Imperial cellars. How this may be done now, I know not; but the vines are in Tokay as before, the presses are there, and, most important, the tradition is there; if the quality of the wine deteriorates, the fault will be with the Hapsburg who owns it.

At Tarza the cellars hold, we were told, only about a fourth of the quantity that used to be in them; but they seemed to hold

a great deal as we walked through the long vaulted underground passages, emerging again to the day-lit ground floor—where was another collation, but this time of bottles only. I have more than once in France accompanied a party of wine-tasters through cellarage, and there it was the usage to taste simply, holding the liquid in the mouth, appraising its savour and bouquet, and then (it sounds indelicate) spitting it out. These Austrians committed no such breach of decorum. Each man of them showed ample stowage about his person, like a stout well-hooped barrel, and they trusted to their capacity. The wines set out varied from 1922 to 1929—which was a great year, though the best of 1928 is ranked even higher. It seemed to me that the 'Aszu' wine was sweeter than I cared for and the Szamorodni harsher; but the experts appreciated both, and went conscientiously through the varying vintages. Then we remounted our lorry and went on, skirting the hill which here showed singularly barren and denuded of vines. This part had been owned by small proprietors, and when the phylloxera made its ravages fifty years ago, they had lacked the capital to replant with American stock on which scions of this characteristic grape could be grafted. Indeed it looked a serious enterprise to reclothe that grim slope with verdure, and at one point the hope had been given up; a great quarry made a wide scar on the hillside, which now, as the Ober-Direktor lamented to us, yielded hard stones instead of luscious wine.

The wine from there must have been of the best, for Royal vineyards begin at the quarry's edge and stretch perhaps half a mile round the southward-facing slope, past which we drove to where the Theiss, a great sluggish river, comes rolling west. Tokay village stands just where the Budrog, a smaller stream but big as the Thames, joins the Theiss; and the vine-covered hillside rises almost precipitously above it. Here too was desolation, for in the year 1928 had come summer hail, destroying where it struck full; and the plants had been given up for lost in certain vineyards, whereas in others, favoured by their exposure, the year's yield had been superb. Now, however, the stocks are shooting again and Tokay will not lose many of its vines.

We halted in the little rambling untidy town for more refreshment—this time a solid meal; and a dozen Austrian voices, discussing what they should eat and what they should drink, made a formidable din in the room. But there had been provided also the traditional part of every Hungarian festa: three gipsies were

in a corner, two with their fiddles, the third seated at the four-legged cymbalum, big as a spinet but squarer. As usual, the leading fiddler, a little monkey-faced man, crop-haired and flea-bitten, dressed in the seedy black broadcloth which is a Hungarian gipsy's ordinary costume, came forward towards the guests and played *at* them. One of the Austrians, the wag of the party, was moved to tenderness by the music, and putting his arm round (or partially round) his wife's waist, signalled expressively that the musician should play specially at her. The wandering music passed into the swiftness of a czardas, and at the dance rhythm the Austrian's broad chest heaved and dilated, till, when the tune whipped itself to a passionate movement, his emotion burst all bounds; he shouted, he beat the rhythm on the table; and what he did, half a dozen other barrel-shaped men did also; some leapt to their feet and, jammed in as they were between table-bench and wall, they tried to sketch steps of a dance; while through this pandemonium waitresses pushed their way, bringing plates of fish stewed up with red paprika, and other such delights; the room rocked with the vibration of the music, the strong flavoured food steamed, and in about five minutes we decided that we should be better off outside, exploring the attractions of Tokay.

These were not great; yet outside the church in the little square it was pleasant to watch the comings and goings; a squireen and his son passed in their landau behind a smart pair of black horses, whose coachman wore the frogged coat and ribboned jaeger hat that are still so often to be seen in this country where motors have not yet displaced the horse. Any day in the streets of Budapest you may observe some young officer leaning back in his seat while his orderly drives a pair. The young officer would doubtless sooner have a car, but horses, being part of his outfit, come cheaper.

At last the meal was over; we rejoined our party, packed ourselves into the lorry and jolted down the street, as I believed, on the road to our train. But we were not yet done with Tokay. There was another halt beside the church; here was another cellar to be visited, belonging to a company which has been formed to handle the wines from the estate of Prince Windischgraetz, and from other noted vineyards in the region. This venerable cellar dated from the fifteenth century and in it our company was invited to partake of two vintages of *aszu* wine. These were, of course, not the very old wines, some of which in these cellars date back to 1868 and other years before the phylloxera. But

they were choice—one made from muscat grapes, the other the normal wine, which has a less cloying sweetness ; but both of them having so high an alcoholic content that the wine can remain open, like sherry, for an indefinite period, without losing its flavour or its bouquet. The guests who emerged from the cellar showed plainly the virtue of what they had imbibed ; the Ober-Direktor stood and beckoned to his flock once more, but his gesture lacked its first energy ; the ball that he bowled would have scarcely travelled two yards down the crease.

So, tossing and swaying, at some thirty miles an hour, we completed the return journey to Szerencz. The rest was not silence. Our gifted and gracious lady found herself disastrously popular, and the strongest-voiced, most festive of the party crowded into our compartment ; it needed some diplomacy to enable us to shift without undue appearance of unfriendliness into a quieter haven. 'Is it that I am too *lustig*, or am I not *lustig* enough ?' said the noisiest of them all pathetically.

Opposite our final seats was a winegrower from the Burgenland, that part of Hungary which has been sliced off and added to Austria. The gracious lady asked how he throve under the new régime. 'Quite well,' he said. 'There is no difference to me, except that we can sell our wine easier because there is no customs barrier between us and Vienna.'

He, who had been a Hungarian subject for fifty years of his placid bovine life, spoke barely two or three words of Hungarian ; and it was natural that he should feel no pain in the transfer. But he was the exception. The attempt to learn even a little about Hungary's most famous wine brought home to me the sadness of this shorn country. Hungarians go at their wine-growing with a will ; the State gives scientific guidance in that as in every branch of agricultural life, as one can see by visiting their wonderful Museum of Agriculture—the only thing of its kind in Europe. But they cannot go at it with a hopeful heart. Tokay no doubt must always find an easy export for its choicest vintages ; there is no parallel to this wine ; and the genial author of *Viniana* firmly believes that a glass or two of it will bring back a patient from the very gates of death. No other wine of any country, no other cordial has, if he is right, the same power, and I find here in Hungary that its strengthening qualities are everywhere recognised. But Tokay is only one of the many Hungarian wines, and to my mind, for ordinary drinking, by no

means the pleasantest ; and in the new Europe, Hungary finds many of its old export markets closed—not through any fault of the wines. At 'The Old Walnut Tree' (*A ven Chiofa*) in Budapest we dined in the open air and drank an *ordinaire* that might almost be a native Chablis ; here gipsies playing to us, not in a small and crowded room, but under the branches and the stars, were indeed a revelation of Hungary ; most of all when the leading fiddler, coming to our table, broke into the regimental march of my host's hussar regiment. That moment, like the music, had its mixture of exultation and of melancholy.—I found that mixture—characteristic, I believe, of Hungary at all times, but doubly so since Hungary's defeat—again when I went to another little restaurant (Mrs. Csizar's, at 10 Bors Utca), where a stout good-natured hostess endeavours to make for the expatriated Transylvanians a tiny Transylvanian corner in Budapest. There you can eat Transylvanian dishes (one famous one is a pancake rolled out till it could sheet a horse—only the finest Hungarian flour will admit of this extension), and there you can drink Transylvanian wines, if you so desire, or Tokay, if you prefer it.—I was wrong when I said that nothing in Budapest had intimacy ; both these eating places had it, and since I could never have found them unaided, and since both are cheap and excellent, I pass on my information to whom it may concern.—If the Hotel Bellevue where I stayed had not this full local colour, yet when coming in of an evening, I looked out from my window and saw tables set on three terraces rising up from the hill behind, and the night gay with music and dancing that would not cease till far on in the small hours, I realised that this was no cosmopolitan casino, nor exotic entertainment made up to attract the tourist ; it was a characteristic expression of the Hungarian character. It had not the paunchy joviality of South Germans, nor yet the Italian expansiveness ; it was the gaiety of a people who enjoy themselves with almost desperate verve, yet are habitually grave, but with eyes that always convey the possibility of laughter. One thing is certain. There are no better-mannered people in Europe than the Hungarians. Whether we met them in town or country, vineyard or restaurant, they gave the same impression of high courtesy, and fine distinction, combined with both the power and the will to act swiftly and efficiently. They are said to be the best in Europe at sabre-play ; well, there is something of the swordsman's poise and elasticity about all their young men.

AN ASPECT OF BRITISH OFFICIAL WARTIME PROPAGANDA.

IN the Great War for the first time in British history the Government recognised officially the value of propaganda as a potent weapon of warfare and as a necessary accompaniment to armament. Like many departments which the war brought into being, it was a rapid improvisation and undoubtedly made many blunders. But from all reliable accounts it was successful, for one of the chief authorities amongst our enemies, General Ludendorff, stated in his *War Memories, 1914-18*, that the Germans were hypnotised by the enemy propaganda 'as a rabbit is by a snake. . . . The onslaught of the enemy's propaganda was of amazing force if unobtrusive.' Writing of the summer of 1917 in Germany, Ludendorff continues :

'In wide quarters a certain decay of bodily and mental powers of resistance was noticeable, resulting in an unmanly and hysterical state of mind which under the spell of enemy propaganda encouraged the pacifist leanings of many Germans.'

In Great Britain in the early days of the war the late Mr. Asquith, the Prime Minister, detailed his colleague, the late Mr. Charles F. G. Masterman, to make a beginning with the presentation to the world of the British case in the war. A full and authoritative history of British propaganda throughout the war has never been written and perhaps it never will be written now. For three men, any one of whom should have produced this work, are now dead—Mr. Masterman who died on November 17, 1927, Mr. G. H. Mair, a great journalist who conducted a branch of propaganda work, who died on January 2, 1926, or Sir James Headlam-Morley, of the Foreign Office and the Board of Education, who died in September, 1929. Sir James Headlam-Morley would probably have produced the most authoritative work, but either Mr. Mair's or Mr. Masterman's book would have probably proved more entertaining reading. Personally I shall always regret that Mr. Masterman never tackled it, for if anyone can be said to have founded propaganda in this country and to have laid down the lines on which it should be conducted, it was Masterman.

The first home for official propaganda was at Wellington House in Buckingham Gate, which had been designed, I believe, for a block of residential flats. Before the war the Liberal Government had taken it over in order to house the Insurance Commission, and Mr. Lloyd George had induced Mr. Masterman to accept the chairmanship of the Commission together with a generous share of the odium which the Insurance Act brought forth in abundance. Masterman was always a bonny fighter and gave as good as he got, but few modern politicians, with the exception of Mr. Lloyd George at certain periods of his life, have been so venomously pursued by a section of the Press almost throughout his public political career. When he was entrusted with the organisation of official propaganda Masterman borrowed the accommodation of Wellington House and also some of its most brilliant civil servants. It was an obvious advantage to conceal as far as possible the existence and the sources of propaganda, and the rather obscure offices of the Insurance Commission therefore proved admirable for this purpose. Masterman defined the nature of the work of his department at Wellington House some time after the war began. He reported that Wellington House was not concerned with the supply of news to newspapers (this was undertaken by the news department of the Foreign Office), but with the production, translation and distribution of books, pamphlets, Government publications, speeches and so forth dealing with the war, its origin, its history and all the varied and difficult questions which arose during its development; the production and distribution of special pictorial papers; assisting in the placing of articles and interviews designed to influence opinion in the world's newspapers and magazines, especially in America; the wide distribution of pictorial matter, cartoons, pictures and drawings, photographs for insertion in newspapers and periodicals, and for exhibition; the production and distribution of cinematograph films; helping to provide information and facilities to the London correspondents of neutral, especially American, papers; personal correspondence with influential people abroad, especially in America; arrangements for the interchange of visits, of personal tours to neutral and allied countries, and of visits of distinguished neutrals and of representatives of the Allies to this country; the production and distribution of maps, diagrams, posters, lantern slides and lectures, picture postcards, and all other possible means of miscellaneous propaganda.

To carry out this ambitious task Mr. Masterman assembled a varied and interesting staff. At the head of it were first Sir Claud Schuster, now Permanent Secretary to the Lord Chancellor at the House of Lords, and afterwards Sir Ernest Gowers, late Chairman of the Board of Inland Revenue. Sir Gilbert Parker was Director of American propaganda with Professor Macneile Dixon of Glasgow University, Mr. A. J. Toynbee of Balliol College, and Mr. R. F. Roxburgh, Whewell International Law Scholar, and subsequently Professor Kemp Smith of Edinburgh. Mr. Eric Maclagan, now Director of the Victoria and Albert Museum, was in charge of French propaganda, assisted by Mr. William Bellows, a well-known Quaker and part author of the French Dictionary that bears his name. The late William Archer, the dramatic critic and author of *The Green Goddess*, was in the Scandinavian department; Campbell Dodgson, Keeper of Prints and Drawings at the British Museum, Sir Anthony Hope Hawkins, more familiarly known as Anthony Hope, Mr. Edwyn Bevan of New College, Oxford, Mr. J. S. Willmore, a great authority on Arabic, Mr. R. Cobden Sanderson, Mr. A. S. Watt, the late Mr. H. T. Sheringham, and a number of civil servants and journalists, completed the organisation.

It was not long after the work had started that the need for a pictorial department naturally became urgent and pressing. Ludendorff wisely observes in his book on the war (in which he constantly extols British propaganda and blames it for much of the collapse of German moral) that 'pictures and films, and illustrations in poster form, strike home more and produce greater effects than writing, and these have a greater influence on the masses.' My association with Wellington House began by assisting Mr. Edward E. Long, an experienced Anglo-Indian journalist, in the production of some beautifully produced illustrated sheets for circulation amongst Moslem peoples. Later I became responsible for a separate pictorial branch. I could not afford, like a number of my colleagues, to give my services voluntarily, but the remuneration which we received was really in the nature of a subsistence allowance. We were all either totally unfit for military service or in a sufficiently low category to justify the authorities in claiming that we were more usefully employed as Government servants than as soldiers. I was given two rather delicate schoolboys, not yet of military age, to help me. One, Hugh Francis, a scholar of Winchester and New College, Oxford, developed a perfect genius for our most varied activities, and the other, Rex Armitage Smith,

equally competent along his own lines, hailed from Rugby, took a commission when he was of military age and is now a Master at his old school. Mr. Elliott Dodds, a scholar of New College, Oxford, was entrusted with the editorship of a monthly illustrated magazine called *The War Pictorial*, which was sent out every month in huge quantities in the following bewildering variety of languages, English, Swedish, Danish, Dutch-French, English-Dutch, French, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, Russian, Greek and French-German. Mr. Frank Adams, a popular artist, with an unusually level head for business, Mr. Trevor Lloyd-Williams now of *The Times*, and a bright lad from Jamaica by name Johnnie Dicks, who was swept into the Army when he came of age and emerged happy and scatheless, completed the pictorial department executive. Occasional help was forthcoming from others from time to time, and Miss Violet Asquith, now Lady Maurice Bonham-Carter, and Miss Barbara Maclaren, now Mrs. Freyberg, wife of Colonel Freyberg, V.C., proved themselves valuable assistants.

Our raw material was principally the photograph. The Press Bureau had successfully urged the issue of official photographs for publication in the papers at home, and an official photographer had been appointed on the Western Front. But the meagre supply which we received from this solitary source was wholly inadequate for presenting some kind of current pictorial commentary on the whole war as it was being waged on land, in the air, at sea, at home, and in the far confines of the Empire. It was only by constant emphasis, and by worrying the much-harassed departments concerned, that more photographers were sent to the Western Front, and photographers were introduced to the Navy, and to all the battle areas. The Air Force was admirably equipped for photography, and lent us their skilful help willingly. An official photographer was appointed at home, and secured most useful pictures illustrative of the spirit and purpose of Great Britain in wartime.

The cinematograph was controlled by a separate department at Wellington House, but it was of great use to us as we were able to obtain what are called 'stills,' i.e. photographic prints from episodes in the films. Mr. Brooke-Wilkinson, the permanent chief of the British Board of Film Censors, had helped the department to produce the famous war films, 'Britain Prepared,' a conspicuous example of successful propaganda, which drew admiration even from our foes, heartened and encouraged our Allies and our kinsmen in the Empire, and enlightened the citizens of neutral countries

who had not become sufficiently aware of the immense British war effort. The photographs from this film proved most popular, and coloured postcards of these photographs were sent all over the world in thousands.

Opportunities for utilising official photographs seemed to increase every day. In addition to supplying the necessary illustrations for all our official books and pamphlets and our own lavishly illustrated publications, either conducted or subsidised by Wellington House, we sent forth countless thousands of prints for reproduction in newspapers, magazines and periodicals outside Great Britain in neutral and allied countries, and in the British Empire. The printing of these quantities of photographs presented a serious problem, but it was solved on equitable lines by the ordinary and effective photographic press agencies in London who banded themselves together in one association and worked night and day to keep us supplied. The assembling and packing and addressing of these prints was accomplished by a small army of young girl clerks in a large empty shop and basement in Buckingham Palace Road. We used the photographs also for lantern slides to illustrate our lantern lectures, for cigarette stiffeners, picture postcards, posters, shop-window exhibitions, and in a greatly enlarged form, for exhibition in big cities. Illustrated propaganda naturally included other matter besides photographs, and the pictorial department was looked to for supplies of maps and diagrams, pictures, cartoons and drawings. Striking designs were evolved showing the growing strength of Britain and her Allies, and the diminishing ascendancy of the Central Powers. Clever ideas for cartoons were sometimes brought to us, and Sancha, the well-known Spanish artist, produced an admirable series of picture postcards, adapting *Æsop's Fables* for propaganda purposes against the Germans. Sir Adolph Tuck published these cards in Great Britain. 'Poy,' the famous cartoonist of the *Evening News*, illustrated a broadsheet written by Mr. Madariaga depicting the unhappy fate of one Don Tudesq who beginning as 'fat, laborious and stubborn' was caricatured by Poy as a very stout and repulsive German. Don Tudesq is described (and appropriately illustrated) as 'despising everybody with absurd and silly pride, getting swelled head, piling up armaments, and finally trying to impose his culture upon the world when he is defeated by all humanity.' At the end a little insignificant and crushed figure is portrayed on his knees, rolling his eyes to Heaven, begging for pardon and forgetfulness. It was a most effective and

brilliant piece of work, and Poy's caricatures of the German conception of the Allies was quite perfect. 'The Degenerate Frenchman he could destroy with one bite,' Don Tudesq is reported as saying, 'The Englishman is a shopkeeper, hypocritical and a liar.' 'The Italian is a singer, vain and talkative.' 'The Spaniard is decadent, an indolent bull-fighter,' and 'only the Teuton is worthy of praise and admiration.' The drawings were extraordinarily successful.

Another example of illustrated propaganda apart from photographs was a book called *Scraps of Paper*, which was published in this country by Messrs. Hodder and Stoughton in 1916. Mr. (now Sir) Ian Malcolm, M.P., had collected the posters and placards and proclamations issued by the Germans and pasted up by them in French and Belgian towns and villages, and reproduced them in facsimile. To read them all through again to-day revives the feelings of anger and fear and despair which we all shared in the early days of the war. Here is General von Bulow's Order to the People of Liège, dated August 22, 1914:

'The population of Andenne, after making a display of peaceful intentions towards our troops, attacked them in the most treacherous manner. With my authorisation, the General commanding these troops has reduced the town to ashes and has had 110 persons shot. I bring this fact to the knowledge of the people of Liège in order that they may know what fate to expect should they adopt a similar attitude.'

There follows a note by the Editor.

'Two hundred and fifty civilians—men, women and children—were killed by the Germans at Andenne on August 20th and 21st, 1914, and 50 at Seilles on the opposite bank of the Meuse. A hundred and fifty-three houses were burnt at Seilles, and 37 at Andenne. It is not true that the Germans were attacked by the civil population, or that they received any provocation whatsoever. The murder and arson were started in cold blood, at a signal; the object was to give point to such a proclamation as this. As a warning to Liège, however, the atrocities at Andenne were superfluous. The liègeois had already had personal experience of German terrorism, for on that very night of August 20th, again at a given signal, the Germans had burnt 55 houses at Liège and murdered 29 civilians—shooting some, bayoneting others, and burning others alive.'

On the last occasion on which I saw the late Sir James Headlam-Morley, who I suppose was one of the chief, if not the greatest,

authority in Great Britain on the origins of the war, he was explaining to a number of his old colleagues at Wellington House that we were inclined to forget to-day the guilt of Germany in starting the war, and that no good service to the cause of peace in the world was rendered by that omission. I can imagine few more vivid reminders of German guilt than these facsimile reproductions of their brutal proclamations in the invaded territories.

Another effective piece of illustrated propaganda which was circulated in neutral countries and actually into the enemy's lines was entitled 'German Prisoners in Great Britain,' and consisted of most excellent photographs of six of the largest prisoners' camps in Great Britain—Donnington Hall, Alexandra Palace, Dorchester, Handforth, Crofthouse Park, and Eastcote. The foreword to the pictures stated that they were taken in response to a request made by the American Ambassador in Berlin.

'They were originally designed to form part of the Württemberg War Exhibition and were actually taken by the photographic section of the Royal Flying Corps. It should be understood that the prisoners were left entirely free to choose whether they would be photographed or not. The photographers had explicit instructions that no prisoner was to be photographed without his consent, and that neither compulsion nor persuasion was to be employed to induce anyone to form part of a group. These instructions were strictly carried out, and it is significant of the readiness with which the prisoners allowed themselves to be photographed that repeated requests were received by the authorities that copies of the photographs should be placed on sale in the camps. The photographs illustrate nearly every aspect of life in the camps, and show that the excellence of the conditions under which the prisoners live are in striking contrast with the regime which obtains in many of the prisoners' camps in Germany. It is only necessary to recall the horrors of a Wittenberg or a Gardelegen to appreciate the admirable organisation of the prisoners' camps in Great Britain.'

There follow pleasant photographs of our late enemies apparently enjoying their incarceration, eating, playing football and tennis, cultivating their little gardens, sitting in a chapel containing the inscription 'Glory to God in the Highest and on Earth, Peace, Good Will toward Men,' sailing model yachts, bathing, dressing up for amateur theatricals, and so forth.

A good deal of illustrated propaganda was published in England in the ordinary way during the war, partly to encourage people at home and partly to set off some of the expense of the production.

The first official artist at the front was Mr. Muirhead Bone, who was appointed by Wellington House. It was Mr. A. S. Watt who suggested to Mr. Masterman that Mr. Muirhead Bone should be sent to France to do drawings for Wellington House and that the drawings which Mr. Muirhead Bone and others made for Wellington House should ultimately be given to one of the National collections. Many other artists were enrolled later, including Sir John Lavery, Sir William Orpen, Mr. C. R. W. Nevinson, Mr. Eric Kennington, Mr. Paul Nash, Mr. James McBey, Mr. Francis Dodd, whose work was exhibited and published. The work of these famous artists was sometimes used for covers of our *War Pictorial*, and a very remarkable collection they make. There is one of a tommy, by Mr. Eric Kennington, and another by Sir William Orpen, of Lieutenant A. P. F. Rhys Davids, D.S.O., M.C., Captain of Eton, 1915-16, who gained official recognition as a 'magnificent fighter, invariably attacking regardless of numbers. He crossed the lines on offensive patrols on fifty-six occasions, and among the chief German pilots he brought down were Schafer and Voss, both famous in their own country.' Orpen's beautiful portrait shows Lieutenant Rhys Davids in flying kit. Muirhead Bone's amazing output was published by Mr. Edward Hudson at *Country Life* in a series called *The Western Front*, to which Sir Douglas Haig contributed a generous tribute. Bone also visited the Grand Fleet, and one of the series is devoted to such scenes as 'A boiler-room in a Battleship,' 'Inside the Turret,' 'In the submerged torpedo flat of a Battleship.' When the *Western Front* series had finished, a continuation was made entitled 'British Artists at the Front.' In this series appeared the work, amongst others, of Mr. Eric Kennington, Sir John Lavery, and Mr. C. R. W. Nevinson. The late Mr. C. E. Montague wrote some of the introductions from General Headquarters in France. In the part devoted to Mr. Eric Kennington, Mr. Montague draws this happy description of the rum ration:

'... just when perhaps a wet night is blenching into a grisly February dawn, the platoon-sergeant comes down the trench from company-headquarters, picking his way lest he let a drop spill from the tin pot of nectar he holds in each hand, with a lesser mug and a spoon in his pocket as instruments of precision for meting out to each man his share of the drink of the gods. The tot never comes within any measurable distance of being intoxicant. But, at that place and at that time, all the virtue that ever was in Arian

or Falernian vine, all the mystic and genial energy that has gladdened the heart of man and fired his songs since the first grape was crushed, seems to have passed into the tiny ration of rum.'

Another series published in London was 'Generals of the British Army' and 'Admirals of the British Navy,' both by Mr. Muirhead Bone's brother-in-law, the late Mr. Francis Dodd. Photographs of these admirable portraits were sent out by us for reproduction, and when a section of the Press were criticising (most unfairly) Admiral Jellicoe, Francis Dodd's portrait of him was constantly in demand. Perhaps the portrait was a little less bellicose than the popular conception of an Admiral! Mr. E. V. Lucas, who wrote the introduction to the series of Admirals, stated that

'Charles Lamb (who was less of a sea-dog even than most men) confessed in old age that he once sat to an artist friend for the portrait of sixteen British Admirals. Mr. Dodd (even could a sitter of such notable companionableness be now found) would have forced himself to dispense with the fun of using him for verisimilitude's sake, because all these heads have been drawn from life and are reproduced as nearly as possible in the colours of life. Looking over the forty and more Naval heroes whom he has limned, one is struck by a generic likeness which is deeper than such similarity as the service beard can confer. Most of the Admirals look like Admirals—and is there a better thing to be?'

The work of British artists during the war has provided a unique record of those years, and I think it is correct to say that it was on a larger scale than that of any other of the belligerents. A great deal of the credit of this departure is due to Masterman, who encouraged and helped Mr. Campbell Dodgson and Mr. A. Yockney who were on the staff of Wellington House.

The value of pictures in preparing propaganda for Moslem peoples was obvious, and one of the most important tasks of the pictorial department at Wellington House was to assist Mr. Edward E. Long in the preparation of his truly amazing large illustrated sheets printed in photogravure on the *Illustrated London News* machines in Arabic, Turkish, Persian, Hindustani and Chinese. Faint memories of constant controversies come back to me over the accuracy of the captions to the pictures—controversies which somehow one could never feel would be solved and laid to rest, because it was so difficult to find a final and undisputed authority to set them at rest. The experts proved so critical of each other,

and the powerless layman could merely keep the ring! Later on, when Wellington House had become part of the Ministry of Information, I found myself involved in a dispute over the Spanish translations in *The War Pictorial* which were intended for South America. An expert was called in to remedy this state of affairs, but alas, confusion and controversy continued to rage, and we were informed that in parts of South America our new Spanish was entirely unintelligible!

Not content with all the ramifications of photographs, pictures, drawings, cartoons, maps, and the like, somebody (I think it was my young colleague, Mr. Hugh Francis) introduced the idea of the gramophone record as a further means of popular propaganda, particularly in the United States, where we visualised a machine in almost every home. Our first suggestion was that His Majesty the King should record a speech on Britain's war effort. We approached the authorities at Buckingham Palace, but we were informed that while the King had no personal objection whatsoever, it was felt by his advisers that it was not a very desirable departure from precedent for His Majesty to make. So we tackled the Army Generals. We secured Lord French and Sir William Robertson. In an empty flat in Victoria Street, Westminster, the Gramophone Company installed their recording machinery. Lord French, a little scornful and nervous, was not very successful, and I believe I am right in adding that he let slip a very hearty 'damn' when he missed his way in the notes with which we had thoughtfully provided him. So we had to start all over again, of course. Sir William Robertson had an excellent recording voice, and his message to America rang out clear and strong. He told of British achievements, and then in a fine crescendo added: 'I say to America: send along every man, gun, and aeroplane you can; send them now, and help us to finish the business on hand quickly and for all time.' Another of our victims for gramophone recording was M. Venizelos, who was secured at the Ritz Hotel where he gave utterance in Greek and French, but we were not able to employ this record to great advantage. The idea of the gramophone for propaganda purposes in fact, was not cordially and generally endorsed by all our colleagues, and I discovered that the late Lord Bryce, our most brilliant ambassador in America, was not enthusiastic over the idea.

'Though I do not like to decline any request put forward in the belief that it may be of use,' he wrote to me, 'I cannot bring myself

to think that a gramophonic deliverance from myself can have in the United States any such effect as desired, and like these devices as little as I do the cinema films (which one is relieved to hear the Cabinet have now got out of). It is not a question of trouble—that would be neither here nor there—but the sort of thing is unpleasing to me. Apropos of America, I wonder whether the interviews which are now being so much more lavishly bestowed on the newspaper men are doing good there; and I wonder whether now that the ordinary supply of news to us from the United States has so much fallen off, the public is not beginning to think that censorship is checking that supply. Certainly my American correspondents represent much more displeasure there at our Black List and mail stopping policy (not to speak of Ireland) than one would gather to exist from the paragraphs about America in our Press.'

As the work of propaganda grew in importance it became more and more an object of newspaper criticism. The late Mr. Asquith, when Prime Minister, as far as I am able to judge, was quite content to leave the British official propaganda in the hands of Mr. Masterman and others, and although reports were called for by the Cabinet, it does not appear that the Prime Minister or his colleagues took a deep and constant interest in the work of Wellington House. Mr. Masterman, unfortunately, was not in the House of Commons through no fault of his own, and although many of his friends and colleagues were in the Government they did not seem then to realise the possibilities of our propaganda work. Masterman himself was under no delusions as to the difficulty and thanklessness of his task. At the very outset, when he embarked on the work, he explained to his colleagues that they would have to labour in secret and be subject to criticism of all kinds, just and unjust, to none of which could they reply; and further, when their work was done, it was most improbable that they would receive any credit or even acknowledgment for their services. This prophecy was amply fulfilled. To begin with it was not difficult for a press which was generally unfriendly to Masterman himself to give the public the impression that any enterprise controlled by him was doomed to be unsuccessful. Not unnaturally all the publicists in the land who were unable to wield swords were desirous of wielding their pens in the service of propaganda, and if, as sometimes necessarily proved the case, some were not invited and others who volunteered were not accepted, it was not surprising that their private feelings were unfriendly towards Master-

man and Wellington House, and that their public criticisms of the official propaganda were definitely hostile. While Mr. Asquith was in power these attacks were ignored, partly perhaps because of his confidence in Masterman, and partly also because of his determination not to be bullied into courses of action of which he disapproved by big London newspaper proprietors, in whose disinterestedness he never seemed wholly to believe. When Mr. Lloyd George superseded Mr. Asquith as Prime Minister, Mr. Masterman was not noticeably supported by the new head of the Government, and it was announced that the work of Wellington House was to be enquired into officially at the request of the Prime Minister. Previous to this enquiry, Mr. John Buchan, then a Colonel, was installed in the Foreign Office and entitled Director of Information. From his time onward our work was constantly interrupted by requests for reports on the various branches of our activities. Criticism of our necessarily large use of paper came from what appeared to us to be entirely interested quarters, and it was not seemly for us as Government servants to make the obvious retort that in comparison with the work of propaganda the reduction in bulk of many excellent but ephemeral British publications would not seriously impair the national effort.

A bulky printed report was prepared containing the findings of the official enquirers together with the most painstaking observations on these criticisms by the heads of the various departments. These were generally reviewed and collated by Mr. Masterman and again by Colonel Buchan. At the request of the Prime Minister this massive document was then sent to Lord Carson, who, we were led to understand, reported that the attacks on the work of Wellington House appeared to him to be unjustified. Mr. Lloyd George was evidently growing weary of this constant criticism from newspaper proprietors of British official propaganda and had characteristically decided to silence it by handing over the responsibilities to the critics themselves. The big newspaper proprietors could not be expected to take subordinate positions in any organisation, so the late Lord Northcliffe had a department of his own at Crewe House and an account of the work done there was published very soon after the end of the war. Wellington House and the Department of Information were handed over to Sir Max Aitken, who became Minister of Information and, not long after, Lord Beaverbrook. We were ejected from Wellington House and placed in a number of hotels

in Norfolk Street, Strand. Masterman and Buchan remained, but a large army of fresh faces was introduced by Lord Beaverbrook. A number of Canadians were drafted in, and prominent business men like Sir Hugo Cunliffe-Owen, of the British-American Tobacco Co., Sir Eric Hambro, of Hambro's Bank, and Sir Harold Snagge were gathered unto us. Mr. Arnold Bennett was there, and I also recall the occasional sight of Lord Rothermere's substantial figure making its way through the busy corridors of the erstwhile hotel.

Meanwhile those who had started at Wellington House clung together and went on with the work and endeavoured to hold up the hands of the chief whom we had grown to like and respect. We all felt, I think, that Masterman had been unfairly treated by the late Government and the new Government and by some sections of the Press, but his unfailing humour and good sense of proportion were a constant source of delight and admiration to all of us to whom he gave his friendship.

When it was all over I had a hand in forming the Wellington House Club, which must be one of the very few social organisations of civilians who were associated in war work who have met together almost with regularity since the war. We met annually at dinner. It was a hard blow when Masterman died in 1927, but when he was alive he was at his most delightful best on these occasions. No reports were ever made, and every imaginable indiscretion was uttered, principally by Masterman, to our huge delight. Not one of us ever missed these happy reunions if he could possibly help it, and I fancy that the affectionate and sincere loyalty of his old staff was a great joy to Masterman himself, who was unhappily no stranger to the fickleness of political friendships. The propaganda work initiated by Masterman has had but scant attention and justice done to it by war historians, but Lord Beaverbrook published a leading article in his *Daily Express* in 1919 referring to Ludendorff's praise of British propaganda and stated that the significance of this pronouncement was that it did tardy justice to the men who had charge of British propaganda in the early years of the struggle.

'Lord Beaverbrook [the article ran], when he became Minister of Information at the beginning of 1918, only took over and developed an organisation which already existed and which, though discouraged by Ministers and too often attacked by the Press, was doing the work which had extorted the admiration of the Prussian leader. For the work of the old department Mr. Masterman and

Colonel John Buchan can claim the credit. They laboured diligently to convert the neutrals, of which America was the most important, and according to hostile evidence, they succeeded. The difficulty of this original department was that it had too little power and practically no direct access to the Cabinet. That it accomplished all that it did up to the end of 1917 shows the success with which it surmounted public indifference and the courage with which it faced official contempt from the long-established Departments of State. When Lord Beaverbrook took over the new Ministry of Information he succeeded to much wider powers, but he was building on a foundation which had already been established. . . . We welcome Ludendorff's praise of the propagandists of 1916 and 1917, the unacknowledged men who started the most potent war organisation that the British Empire has ever seen.'

This was a true and honest statement. It was refreshing to find such candour in a daily paper, and it was a generous tribute from its proprietor.

In ordinary times the word propaganda is highly and rightly suspect, and any newspaper that endeavours too noticeably and to the detriment of its ordinary news pages to force a particular point of view upon its readers will suffer in real influence. During the war propaganda was an essential weapon, and we used every means open to us (wireless was not available) to influence our Allies, our enemies and those who were determined on neutrality. Personally I cannot recall an occasion when we circulated a deliberate untruth, and infinite pains were taken to sift information. There was a hideous story of a German corpse factory which appeared in some quarter during the war. A story of this sort had obvious propagandist value if true, but it was most carefully sifted by our authorities and in spite of much circumstantial evidence as to its reliability, it was rejected. No propaganda of any nature will succeed in its object for long unless the cause for which the propaganda is being conducted is acceptable to the better intelligence and feelings of mankind. It is true that propaganda requires all the organisation and machinery of the highest technical excellence, but it will not permanently popularise and advance a bad cause. The best feature of British Propaganda was, after all, that we had nothing to hide and little to fear from the circulation of the truth.

IVOR NICHOLSON.

SPARROWFIELD STORIES.

BY F. H. DORSET.

VI. 'ONE STEP, TWO STEP.'

IN the back bedroom of 'Tintagel,' 9 Barley Road, Sparrowfield, Sidney Pratt stood before his mirror and brushed his hair. Long after the brown thatch covering a tingling scalp had arrived at a condition of glossy perfection he continued to brush mechanically, the while he gazed unseeing upon his flannelled reflection and mused savagely upon birdcages. Life, thought Sidney, so far as he personally was concerned, had hitherto consisted of one dam' birdcage after another, the door of each in succession opening so cunningly flat against the last that he had never had a chance to slip out sideways. Well, there were limits to a fellow's capacity for hopping obediently in a given direction, and when it came to being urged forward into final imprisonment for life there was but one thing to do: sit tight and refuse to budge. Let 'em poke, they should not move him! Suddenly smiting his brushes together and setting them down, Mr. Sidney Pratt uttered his sentiments aloud. 'No fear,' he said.

The back bedroom of 'Tintagel' bore upon its walls a trellised wall-paper heavily laden with pink roses, suggestive of a maiden bower dedicated to Flora. The carpet was covered by yet another trellis pattern, apparently of linked blue sausages on a lighter ground. The furniture was of a light oak, punctured here and there with fretwork tulips, and each pale-blue tile backing the washstand carried a conventionalised pale-blue water lily. Down in a spare bedroom of the Pratts' original home in the Old Suburb these things had not troubled an uncritical preoccupied Sidney, but here in the New Suburb, dedicated to his own daily use, they had come to oppress him. Dad and Mum had inherited the shoe-shop and the old home in the early nineteen hundreds, after ten years of marriage, and they had then indulged in an orgy of re-furnishing according to the catalogues of a new century, and ever since they had been happy with the result and had carried it over almost intact into retirement, 'Tintagel' and a post-War era impatient

of swirling ornamentation. Their son, for his part, preferred modern simplicity and the age of leg, lipstick and liberty deplored by his mother. Only recently had it dawned upon him with sincere dismay that the younger couples installed in twin houses up and down airy hygienic Barley Road and its counterparts were already engaged in hardening up a fresh convention of existence, and that their twin doors were entrances to so many separate cages of like pattern. In his mind's eye he beheld just such another set cunningly ajar for his permanent entrapment, and to this enticement he now uttered his emphatic repudiation, 'No fear.'

Sidney Pratt drew on a blue flannel blazer and looked at his wrist-watch. The hour was ten minutes to three, and Beryl Burke would be expecting him to call for her as usual at 'Myrona,' five doors down, preparatory to their inevitable summer Saturday afternoon stroll to the Tennis Club grounds together. To-day, in particular, his people would expect him to speed there early with the good news which had delighted them on his midday return from the Motor Works. If he didn't go until it was late enough for Beryl to imagine him delayed at the Works, if he went down only just in time for that promised game with the Cartwrights he might begin the first opening of a rift which he felt, with sudden unreasoning panic, must be made at all costs between Yesterday and To-day, the Past and the Future. He had never so clearly visualised before the nature of the octopus tentacles by means of which lesser Suburbia anchors its victims irrevocably to itself. He and Beryl had from childhood walked so naturally together that he had scarcely given the matter a thought until these last few months. In the days when the New Suburb was not, 'Burke's Chemistry' and 'Pratt's, *The Shoe Shop*,' always stood side by side in the commercial and social life of Sparrowfield; side by side also throughout four long years of war and bereavement. He and Beryl, each the youngest by a long spell of a family of three, had formed their first childish alliance for offence and defence in the sharp aching void brought about by the sudden silencing of four young but older male voices. They had crept dumbly together in spirit during those queer deadened evenings and holidays when no elder brothers returned to boss and direct juvenile games. Even in their scholastic careers they had kept step at their separate departments of the County High School, gaining scholarships and developing independent lines of work. Beryl now travelled daily to Town and secretarial employment, while Sidney had turned

an uninterested shoulder upon shoe selling, displayed intense enthusiasm about motor construction, and was already a somewhat valued employé of the Sparrowfield Motor Company. Apparently he was one of the lucky ones, with a life job of steadily increasing importance and attractiveness placed conveniently for him within two miles of his father's front door, and his parents, turning thankful faces toward him like elderly sunflowers to the sun, rejoiced openly in the security of their only remaining child. Never, he knew, could he break away from Sparrowfield without breaking their hearts. They wanted him imprisoned for ever close by their hearth-stone, married and settled in some duplicate of 'Tintagel' with Berry Burke. Lately family hints to that effect had been falling like hailstones, and they had stricken him awake to his danger. Berry was all right; in fact there had been a period in their mid 'teens when only Berry's determined lack of sentiment had prevented him from vaguely proposing marriage 'some day.' He had merely held over that proposal for the right psychological moment, but now, when Beryl's nonchalance was becoming a little overdone and betrayed her expectations, the prospect of marriage and perpetual settlement in Sparrowfield suddenly repelled him. A rift with Berry, hitherto his bulwark against all other feminine raiders, was going to be painful to both of them, but for the sake of liberty it must be brought about. If he was going to hurt the poor girl he had better do so swiftly and kindly; have a quiet conversation with her after tennis, out of doors and away from the emotional miasma of Barley Road. Meantime he would merely arrive late and alone at the tennis-courts, and in order to achieve this end he must kill nearly forty minutes in the seclusion of his own bed-chamber. Mum was trotting about the house filling flower vases, Dad was pottering about the back garden so that nowhere within the territory of 'Tintagel' could his dawdling pass without comment; and 'Myrona's' windows commanded a view of the only exit into the road and effectively prevented unobserved escape for a solitary stroll. He picked up a book from beside his bed and sat down heavily.

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In the dining-room window of 'Myrona,' Beryl Burke stood wrapt in thought watching stray glimpses of the intimate life of the Jacksons, just over the road. Watching, she frowned. Time was when Dorothy Smith wouldn't have been seen dead in a dust-cap

at three o'clock in the afternoon, but as Dorothy Jackson, after eighteen months of marriage, she had already reached that degree of incessant domestic toil which seemed to demand the continual use of caps and overalls from early morn to dewy eve. That came of marrying and producing twins on five pounds a week when you had been accustomed to living independently in digs. and earning nearly as much for yourself alone. You were jerked right out of step with ordinary existence, and it took you years to get back into it again, if you ever did. Lord, what a life! All your savings and your husband's sunk in the purchase of a house, which you had to run single-handed, and nothing to fall back on in emergency. Sparrowfield could tell of many such marriages. Dorothy must have been properly mad to have risked it.

Berry turned her attention a little farther up the road to where the Simpsons' Baby Austin stood by the Simpsons' gate awaiting the Simpsons, who possessed no other baby and had no intention of producing any. Jimmy Simpson was doing well with Salad Oil, which he and his father imported wholesale in the City. Sparrowfield, for the junior Simpsons, was to be only a temporary abiding-place. Meantime they kept a maid and an Alsatian dog and the Baby Austin, and were saving up for a really smart place in a much smarter neighbourhood. They dined frequently in Town and went to Night Clubs and Shows, and certainly, quite certainly, the slender and charming Sylvia had deteriorated. Berry was all for frankness and the destruction of false reticence, but really Sylvia had, since her marriage with that smug Jimmy, developed a mind like a sink. If mother knew half the revelations she had made to her, Beryl, mother'd have a fit. Happily nowadays, one guarded one's parents' innocence, and mother didn't know. There was Sylvia; coming out in one of those new taggly dresses down to the ankles which Fashion was trying to foist anew upon Suburbia. Under a wide drooping hat her make-up showed hard and crude. She had not yet learnt to tone it down to a new craze for the delicate and demure. Ass! Berry shrugged her shoulders disgustedly, and fell to considering the problem of the Hartingtons, over there by the corner of Haig Avenue. The Hartingtons both went to business separately every day, and only met in the evening, because they couldn't afford to do otherwise. Mary Hartington's job just made matrimony possible for them, but it could only be retained at the price of an empty cradle. Marriage for them seemed to have developed into a rather sterile partnership in more ways

than one, and the very orderliness of their undisturbed, carefully decorated, little house carried its own pathos. After all, it wasn't *natural*. There was no freedom in such an existence; no spontaneous riot of bloom and blossom. Inhibitions hedged them about. Possibly even Dorothy Jackson's dustcap was preferable.

The Kings, round the corner and therefore just out of sight from 'Myrona,' were really almost the only quite comfortable young couple living near Barley Road, mused Beryl Burke. *They* were quite satisfied with fair means, several children, their house, and each other, and they might be regarded as lucky. But again, oh what a life! Their very contentment moved the onlooker to throw stones. It was so utterly Sparrowfieldian, this absorption in infants, gardening and the Office; so painfully similar to the preoccupation of one's own people. Berry turned away from the window and considered afresh the room from whence she had just helped to clear away the last traces of Saturday's midday meal. How typical it was! When they had moved up here from the Old Suburb, mother had made quite a gallant effort after modernity, but you could not easily raise a permanent embankment against the tide of old married wont. Somewhere after the age of forty you settled and spread, and the elder Burkes had never moved house until after their sixtieth birthday. Beryl herself had been born to them, like an afterthought of Providence, when both were past forty. Here, in this comfortable living-room were all the outward and visible signs of the inward spiritual qualities governing successful marriage in lesser Sparrowfield. Whether you were married in 1889 or 1930 neither aeroplanes nor electric vacuum cleaners could make two pennyworth of vital psychological difference. If you wanted to escape from such fatty degeneration of the mind, you must not wed anybody whose life was permanently glued down to Sparrowfield and that, of course, put the tin hat on old Sidney. In spite of mother and spasms of serious weakness in her own constitution, old Sidney must be headed off from making a definite proposal, which if once uttered, would spoil their present companionable routine as surely as a thunderstorm must spoil a garden party. He was so useful, was Sidney; a tower of defence against the kind of young man whom you didn't want to be bothered with. And, à propos of Sidney, it was past three o'clock and she wasn't ready for tennis. Berry Burke awoke to active life once more, fled upstairs, and shook herself rapidly into a white frock.

It was three-thirty when, rather crossly, she closed the front door of 'Myrona' and marched down to the front gate alone. Simultaneously the front door of 'Tintagel' opened. Berry halted on the pavement and waited, smiling, for the young man's approach.

'Hullo!' she said, 'I thought you'd been kept at the Works, or something, and I was just going on without you.'

'Sorry.' Surprisingly Sidney Pratt blushed a deep unwonted red. 'I hoped . . . I mean, I was afraid . . . you'd have gone.' He offered no further explanation of his delay, and they fell into their accustomed pace side by side. Berry glanced at him sideways. He was still blushing, and the phenomenon stirred in her a strange sense of subdued triumph. After all, if anyone who knew your faults as well from long acquaintance as Sidney knew hers managed to want to marry you, wasn't that a considerable compliment? And if she took him . . . there'd be a duplicate of 'Myrona' and a really swanky car (trade price, from the Works) and a gently rising income. Heaps of people would envy her—and a lot those same people would know about it and the desperate sense of limitation not wholly material which would encompass her! In course of time, no doubt, everything would enlarge a bit along with the income; house, car, family, and Sidney's waist-line. They would become 'People' in Sparrowfield, with a footing among the Sparrowfield nobs and an uneasy consciousness that while their own aspirates were sound, those of the Old Folk sometimes trembled. Those things didn't really matter, of course. You were a filthy snob if you let them trouble you. But . . . no, it didn't bear thinking about, any of it, and here she was walking in absolute silence thinking about it as hard as she could! She began to talk rapidly.

'How's old Poulton been behaving?' she asked. Old Poulton was Sidney's immediate superior and pet aversion at the Works: therefore, usually a safe subject for conversation. According to Sidney, the man was a footling fool, nevertheless the news that he had actually been sacked came to Berry as a surprise. 'Who takes his place?' she asked quickly, then, answering her own question, 'I suppose you do.'

'Yes,' assented Sidney, swinging his racket absently. 'It's me.'

'I'm jolly glad,' remarked Berry, determinedly commonplace. 'Congrats. Up you go, Sidney, and I suppose up goes the screw, and you've earned it. If you keep on like this you'll be one of

Sparrowfield's big men one day, spouting about Industry at Public Meetings and opening Fêtes.'

'Not me!'

'Oh yes, you will. You won't be able to help yourself. You come of the very oldest Sparrowfield stock, and you're going to grow like a well-rooted turnip. Sidney, you'll get fat! See if you don't.'

'Don't talk rot!'

Beryl laughed. Sidney really seemed annoyed by her remarks. Perhaps it was a little unkind thus to try and take the gilt off his new gingerbread. She relented a little and spoke kindly.

'Don't worry,' she said. 'You really are to be congratulated, old boy. You aren't seriously afraid of getting fat, are you?'

'More afraid of getting fat-headed!' said Sidney concisely. He looked at her face and away again, as though her expression of affectionate interest disconcerted him. 'Look here, Berry,' he continued, hurriedly, 'I want to have a serious talk with you, after tennis, somewhere quiet. The Gardens?'

Already they were entering the gates of the Tennis Club, those fine wrought-iron gates which once admitted to the private grounds of Sparrowfield House, now demolished. The grounds themselves have been deftly turned to the Club's requirements and to those of a modern suburb's Public Gardens, but there still remain several leafy walks beloved of sauntering sweethearts, and even as he spoke Sidney remembered the Garden's sentimental associations and cursed himself inwardly.

'It's only something we can't talk about in a crowd,' he added, making bad worse. 'Oh, blow the blinking Cartwrights: we're keeping them waiting.'

The Cartwrights were middle-aged and took tennis seriously. Berry immediately became apologetic.

'I'm awfully sorry,' she babbled. 'It's Sidney's fault that we're late. He delayed me.'

Mrs. Cartwright eyed the pair sardonically. Berry Burke and Sidney Pratt were usually as self-possessed a couple of young people as any in Sparrowfield, and not at all above keeping their elders waiting for anything without blushing unitedly. Already a chance wind of Heaven had blown her word of Sidney's unexpected promotion, and she drew her own conclusions. Of course, they'd been fixing things up definitely at last. Everyone knew that they'd only

been waiting for his income to reach a possible figure before announcing their engagement.

'Oh,' said Mrs. Cartwright archly, 'I see! Well, Reggie and I have kept the court by playing singles, so come along.'

Mr. Cartwright walked to the court beside Berry and talked of Wimbledon as he went. On her other side Sidney muttered something incoherent in her ear about 'explaining presently.'

'I'm in for it!' mused Berry reluctantly. 'He's really going to propose and everything comfortable between us will go phut!' She felt, abruptly, angry with Sidney. Couldn't the fool *see*? Hadn't she been persistently cool and sisterly in face of the solid phalanx of both their families? Sidney was hurting her by himself inviting hurt. Why in the name of common sense had she actually permitted herself to be *shy* about it all, instead of broaching the subject boldly before it came to this, and settling it for ever? Well, she and Mr. Cartwright were playing Sidney and Mrs. Cartwright for a change, instead of their usual combination, and perhaps if she displayed sufficient savagery over the game Sidney would perceive that she was not in a fit mood for a proposal. She proceeded to put the notion into action, and watched him with grim secret sympathy as he leaped about the court, lashed by his partner's exhortations. Decidedly Sidney Pratt was off his game.

Nevertheless Beryl's heart sank when, after a tea during which he studiously avoided her, Sidney deliberately sought her side and requested a stroll along the beech avenue. Mrs. Cartwright watched them depart down the dappled shadowy way with interest, comfortably unaware of the young man's first remark made as soon as he and the girl were out of earshot.

'That woman,' he said fiercely, 'wants pole-axeing!'

Beryl forbore comment for some moments, then she said with studied aggravation, 'Why?'

'For existing!' said Sidney bitterly. 'However. . . . Look here, Berry, we've got to thrash out something important. Have you noticed anything queer about the way our parents have been behaving lately?'

'If you ask me,' replied Beryl judicially, 'most people of their generation are chronically queer in some respects, but I shouldn't worry. They've got their own notions, same as us, and I never argue with them.'

'That's all right, generally speaking, but this is over something particular. Your mother's quite likely to tackle you on the subject,

if she hasn't already, and mine's been dropping hints that nobody could avoid, and now I've got this rise, they'll all be at it. That generation can't understand that going about together and preferring to keep out of the crowd doesn't of necessity mean that two people want to get married and tied up for good: and what I wanted to ask you was . . . Well, anyhow, you're not infatuated with me, are you, old thing? We needn't toe the mark just to please them, need we?'

The girl winced involuntarily, struck with a keen shaft of humiliation. So he hadn't meant to propose! And she had endured all that feverish dread of inflicting pain for nothing, for a perfectly false supposition! All those pros and cons and conflict with self over a case which didn't exist! Her speechlessness deceived him, and he slipped a contrite hand through her arm.

'Sorry if I've hurt you, old girl,' he apologised, 'but seriously it's not much catch marrying and settling down here, is it? I don't think you'd be frightfully happy if we let family opinion push us into getting spliced, would you?'

Berry retained her presence of mind and his arm with an effort. She laughed—and thought that her laughter sounded like Sylvia Simpson's.

'My good ass,' she said, 'if you're trying to apologise for not proposing to me, don't! I'm very glad you haven't. I was afraid that you might, and that I'd have to explain to you that I simply couldn't stick being married to you at any price. Sparrowfield and the Works, and your kind of domestic tastes for ever! If ever I do marry, it'll be out of all this, you bet! I'd have gone to share a flat in Town with Minky Marvel, as she wanted me to, long ago, if there'd been others to stop at home and Dad's health was better. Haven't you heard me grouching enough about things at home to've understood my feelings?'

He withdrew his hand and offered her cigarettes. She helped herself with cool steady fingers.

'If it comes to that,' he said, 'we've both grouched enough about things in general, but all the same you've always struck me as being pretty contented. You go to most things here, short of mixing with the top-notchers. What do you want to marry? A film-producer?'

'Anything reasonably decent with some cash and some ideas outside his work, and a nice flat in town,' replied Berry flippantly. 'I could even do with a highbrow better than with a man who

just made a success of his business and tinkered about in the garden between whiles. I want to be able to live where people talk about something besides business and Free Trade and the Test Match, which is what every male in this place comes to after he's forty. You're doomed to that condition already: I've noticed the symptoms of it for quite a while.'

Sidney closed his cigarette-case slowly. A shaft of evening light, slanting between the trees, bathed the girl in baffling illumination. Their eyes met, and with an odd helpless gesture she dropped her unlit cigarette upon the turf and stooped to recover it.

'Don't look at me like a boiled owl, Sidney!' she cried sharply.

'Sorry,' he muttered again. 'But, I say, Berry, haven't you ever realised that I don't stick here from choice? That I'm stuck for the same kind of reason as your own? It's not so much that I'd mind marrying you if you'd have me; it's the life of this place. It's condemning both of us to this kind of life and making it impossible ever to escape from it. Marrying anyone on my screw would mean, as far as I can see, Sparrowfield and being afraid ever to take a risk. But I didn't know you felt that way too.'

'Well, I do; and in any case, here or anywhere, I don't think I'd want to marry *you*. It would be like marrying a brother or the stodgiest kind of first cousin. Wash that out, my good lad.'

'All right,' he agreed grimly, 'call that notion washed out. But I'd like you to get me correctly, just the same, and I don't like being told I'm low-brow and only fit for Sparrowfield society, and that I'm destined some day to go burbling about here in a top-hat. It's not funny, because it's too beastly probable. You can't make a business success of things here and avoid something of the sort. I like my work, and that makes it worse.'

Berry lit her cigarette and stared before her.

'Yes,' she agreed, 'you like work, and you like *your* work. That's the difference between you and some of the "Cissys" who belong to this Tennis Club for instance. What you want is more interests outside your job. Look here, old boy, Sparrowfield's only ten miles from Town. Now you've got your rise, I suppose you'll have four hundred a year, not bad at your age as jobs go to-day. Why don't you strike out on your own, and share a flat in Town with some other man and motor down every day? You could always lunch with your people, and sleep here sometimes. I know a fellow in the Office who's living in digs and would jump at the chance of sharing a self-contained bachelor flat. Why not take

something furnished and try the experiment for a month or two, anyhow? That wouldn't do any harm.'

Sidney made an uncertain noise, and she eyed him with twinkling eyes and restored equanimity.

'You're getting swaddled,' she said. 'The old people have mapped out everything for both of us, and there's going to be an almighty upset if we disappoint them too abruptly. But—listen! As long as they think we're still hovering on the edge of an understanding about putting up the banns we can slope about together in peace as usual, only more so. Now, suppose that next Saturday you drive straight up to Town from the Works and stand me a lunch and a *matinée*? And our *matinée* will be looking at flats together, because I can get you addresses and tell if they're suitable when we see them much better than you can. Now's your chance and if you don't escape now from your everlasting living at home, you'll be hopeless and when I'm married to my millionaire or my interesting pauper, I shan't bother to know you! Just come up and look round, and when you've found something you like, then you can break the news quietly at home. You could have such fun in a flat; your own friends and everything, right out of the rut!'

They had seated themselves upon a rustic bench by the side of the drive. The young man threw away his cigarette and produced and lit a pipe; sure sign of a cogitating mood, and another of the traits which marked him off from the 'Cissys' of Beryl Burke's contempt. She watched him anxiously, while there shot through her mind the vision of an emancipated Sidney, a changed Sidney, whom one might possibly marry after all—in Town.

Presently he spoke.

'There wouldn't be any harm,' he agreed, 'in looking over a few flats. You're right. I've got to get free and now I can.' He regarded her gratefully. She had offered him a way of escape, surprisingly, from between the opened doors of two cages. 'You're a sport, Berry,' he remarked with affection.

'You might have grasped that fact sooner,' she replied, rather tartly, rising from the seat. 'Saturday, then, outside the Office at one o'clock.'

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The little grey car nosed its way carefully out of the stream of traffic and swung down the quieter street which led to Rumbold Place, Bloomsbury. Its occupants, after a couple of hours spent in inspecting flats, were slightly distraught and silent. They had

examined service flats which were too expensive, plain flats, flats on all floors. So far none had met with Sidney's whole-hearted approval. Flat 5B, 60 Rumbold Place, was the last on their list. It was also but a step from that which Minky Marvell shared with a girl friend, where the flat hunters were shortly to take tea before sallying forth together with their hostesses to dine out and 'make an evening of it.' Therefore at Berry's suggestion, the grey two-seater was parked in a garage at the corner of Rumbold Place, to be called for after the theatre, and the pair proceeded on foot up the Place, from whence a short cut would take them presently to Minky Marvell's dwelling.

Most of the houses in Rumbold Place are at least sixty years old, three-storied, with attics surmounting them and large basements below. Behind each is a narrow walled garden. Glory has departed from Rumbold Place, but it is eminently respectable in appearance and most of its houses have become private hotels or have been partitioned and divided ingeniously into flats. Flat 5B in number 60 has been cunningly contrived out of the attics, but there is no lift. You climb heavenwards to it up four flights of curving stairs and are faced at the top of the final flight by a robust mahogany door, doubtless salvaged from some other quarter and re-set in the deal partition which converts Flat 5B into a self-contained tenement. Sidney spoke disparagingly of the stairs, but it pleased his conductor to be flippant still.

'They'll keep your bulk down,' she assured him, 'and this is such a good address. It's almost Hyde Park, you know. Besides, up here you'll have a *view*.' She pressed the electric bell, and they stood waiting upon a perilously narrow strip of landing. A second ring, after several minutes, produced response from within, and the mahogany door opened carefully, to reveal the massive figure of a large lady tightly clad in flowered voile. Large scarlet drop ear-rings dangled from her ears to her shoulders, under a profusion of much-curled black hair; scarlet painted lips repeated the colour note in a bleakly powdered face. Small sloe-black eyes looked out from beneath heavy lids, and a powerful nose dominated her face's entire landscape. She looked at her visitors enquiringly. An aroma of whisky floated halo-wise around her.

Sidney raised his hat politely and extended the Agent's notice to view the premises. 'Mrs. Rich?' he remarked enquiringly. 'The lady who is arranging to let this flat furnished for Mrs. Mayfair, who is abroad?'

The excessively ear-ringed lady parted her red lips in a smile which displayed a double row of dazlingly artificial teeth. 'Come in!' she said, and stood aside.

They entered a narrow passage in which stood an oaken settle supporting a large leather suit-case, on the side of which a worn blue and white steamship company's label marked 'Sydney' caught Beryl's observant glance. The large lady surged before them into a room wherein, on an oval polished table lay the remnants of a meal for two; evidently the usual abode of somebody with a keen feminine eye for comfort, judging by the profusion of cushions and ash-trays. It was a long lofty apartment, with a wide window looking upon the quiet private back garden, but half-blinded by a stucco parapet outside and further safeguarded by iron bars, somewhat close-set. Unlike the average bars of nursery heights, these were perpendicular. Perhaps, thought Sidney, eyeing them with disfavour and deciding forthwith that this flat also was a dud, perhaps the kids had climbed horizontal bars like monkeys in the days when this was a nursery, and their people had altered the arrangement in consequence.

The lady of the ear-rings was speaking.

'Scuse untidiness,' she said. 'I've had a friend to lunch late, and I've been packin' ever since. Pleased to meet you. Sorry can't offer you any hospitality, but there's none left in the bottle. Take a pew?'

Berry looked at Sidney and replied for both.

'No, thank you,' she said crisply, 'we came to see over this flat, you know, from the Agent, and we haven't time to sit down.'

'Wait a minute,' said the stout woman. 'Bedroom isn't tidy as this. Couldn't show it to the gentleman till I've cleared up a bit. You sit down, my dears. There's box chocolates—somewhere on sofa. That'll 'muse you for a minute or two. And theresh any 'mount illustrated papers.'

She ebbed out of the room while Sidney was engaged in protesting that the flat would not suit him and that they would spare her further trouble, and the door, stoutly mahogany as the outer portal, closed easily behind her. Closed and clicked.

Berry looked again at Sidney and grimaced.

'What a woman!' she remarked. 'Well, I suppose we'd better look at the rooms and depart politely. She's had enough "hospitality" to make her a bit quarrelsome, don't you think?'

Sidney acquiesced, and surveyed the over-cushioned luxuriance

of the combined dining- and drawing-room with disgust. Berry, however, began an eager tour of inspection along the walls, and called his attention to a number of signed etchings whose fine quality even Sidney the Philistine could not but observe. She became excited, too, over a large and beautiful sideboard, which, she declared, was certainly *real* Chippendale, and how ever had its owner managed to get it hauled right up here?

'I'll tell you what,' said Berry with decision, 'whatever her friend Mrs. Rich may be like, Mrs. Mayfair must be a woman of culture. Most of the stuff in here is frightfully good, and this book-case is full of what *look* like First Editions and things like that. Only it's locked.'

'I'm blowed if I care!' answered Sidney restively. 'I couldn't stand this hole for ten minutes. You can't see a blinking thing but the tops of the poplars in the back garden, and it's barred up like a cage. But for the skylight it'd be dark after midday, and apparently that doesn't open, so it must get beastly hot up here sometimes. Nothing doing here, Berry. Let's get out of it quickly.'

'Right-o. However, we'll have to be polite and tactful; I don't like the looks of that female. For two pins she'd abuse you, I'm sure. What an age the horrid old creature is taking about coming back! Hello, what's that?'

'That' was a double sound of footsteps in the passage and the creak of straps faintly heard as somebody dragged the heavy suit-case from the oak seat. There was a pause, then an opening and closing of the outer door, followed by silence which settled as quietly as a moth and pervaded the whole flat.

'I do believe,' said Berry breathlessly, 'that she and her friend she was entertaining have forgotten all about us and gone out!'

Sidney made no immediate reply. He went to the door and turned the handle without effect. With a dismayed ejaculation he rattled it.

'It's locked!' he exclaimed, and dropping on one knee, peered through the keyhole. 'The key's been taken out,' he added wildly, 'we've been locked in, Berry! I say . . .'

'Rot,' said Berry sharply. 'Here! Let *me* try that door!'

Assault, single and then combined, upon the bland mahogany only confirmed Sidney's diagnosis of the situation. They were locked in, with the remnants of a meal for two which they had not had the pleasure of eating, an empty whisky bottle and half-filled

syphon, plenty of chintz and Chippendale, and no way of exit. With a great effort Beryl contrived to remain calm. As she remarked after several minutes of united shouting for succour, to which nobody responded, there was no use in both of them losing their heads.

'Who's losing their head?' enquired Sidney resentfully, thumping hard upon the floor with an ornamental poker.

'You are!' retorted Berry. 'Stop that noise a moment. I want to hear if anybody's heard.'

Nobody had heard. The flat beneath was empty. After listening in strained silence for a few seconds Sidney gave his attention to the barred and parapeted window. Departure by that route was out of the question, nor could one signal distress from thence with any chance of anyone more helpful than a blackbird observing the phenomenon, while the skylight was most decidedly cemented in.

'I suppose,' said Sidney dubiously, 'that if the worst comes to the worst I *could* smash it and crawl out on to the roof or something.'

'Well, please don't until the last resort,' begged Berry. 'It might be awfully dangerous on the roof and you'd be taken for a cat-burglar. Surely we'll make someone hear soon!'

'But what on earth's the idea, locking us up and leaving us like this?' asked Sidney. 'There were evidently two of them, and even if they were both squiffy . . . which I doubt, somehow.'

'So do I,' said Berry dully. 'I'm beginning to doubt whether even the fat female was as squiffy as she suggested. She had a very steady eye. And do you notice anything particular about that sideboard?'

Sidney regarded the piece of furniture indicated with attention.

'Why . . . no,' he said slowly, 'except that there's nothing on it.'

'Quite,' said Berry, and lit a cigarette tremulously, 'just take a squint inside it, will you?'

Sidney obeyed, wondering, discovering empty drawers, an unoccupied cellarette, and the glass linings of four salt-cellar containing salt but minus their silver settings. He turned swiftly to the table, where the meal for two was set with kitchen plate.

'Oh I say!' he began.

'Just look around the room,' continued Berry relentlessly; 'there's not a scrap of silver anywhere. If that woman *was* Mrs. Rich, she and her pal have, I really think, cleared out the portable

valuables and gone off with them, unless Mrs. Mayfair left 'em all in the Bank.'

'You don't believe that *wasn't* the Rich woman?' cried Sidney, in horror-stricken tones. 'You don't suggest that we disturbed a couple of burglars and that they've cleared and left *us* to face the music when somebody finds out?'

'It looks like it,' replied Beryl, 'although that seems a stupid thing to do, because we're locked in and haven't any silver, so we can't be mistaken for burglars ourselves. But perhaps that creature was expecting somebody when we rang, and thought that we were better buried in here, out of the way.'

'I fancied I heard somebody else come into the flat after she'd shown us into this room,' agreed Sidney. 'Probably that friend who came to lunch had been to get a taxi, and they wanted time to clear before we could describe them to anyone who asked questions.'

'Then,' said Berry, 'either that woman was Mrs. Rich herself or else she knows that Mrs. Rich isn't expected back for hours and hours!'

Sidney sat down on the sofa, regardless of detested cushions, and strove to present a calm front.

'We'd better take a breather,' he suggested, 'and then yell like blazes. If we made enough row *someone* in this building must hear us!'

'I'm sure I hope so!' said Berry, still smoking tremulously, 'or as like as not we'll have to spend the night here, and in that case it'll just finish our people. They'll take us by our necks and drag us to the altar!'

'Probably,' assented Sidney. 'So, if you don't want to marry a condemned lowbrow Suburbanite you'd better yell loud. Now, One . . . Two . . . Three—Go!' They shrieked in unison, and the empty tumblers on the littered table jingled, but no other response arrived.

'This house is too dam' solid,' complained Sidney. 'Victorian, sound proof; that's the trouble. It's a pity you don't use hairpins.'

'Why?'

'I might have had a shot at picking the lock with one. Can you see any wire about?'

They searched the room carefully, but found no wire. Even the pictures hung by cords, and a brown leather bag like a small tool-bag placed on the bureau proved to be locked. After some

debate they decided not to force it open, for if it contained valuables a further item would thereby be added to a future already overloaded with subjects for explanation. Rapidly fading daylight warned them of the flight of time.

'I'm going to smash that skylight,' declared Sidney finally, recklessly balancing a chair on the cluttered table and a foot-stool on the chair; but even when he poised himself perilously on the top of the whole erection the skylight was still inaccessible and the ornamental poker of no avail. Berry helped him down, and besought him not to repeat the manoeuvre. They switched on the electric light and resumed thumping operations on floor and door without result other than fatigue. At nine o'clock Berry announced with suspicious faintness that she was hungry.

'It's no use shouting any more until we've stoked up a bit,' she protested. 'There's food, and there's soda water, although the hospitality is all gone. Don't be an ass. Sit down and eat something, do, even if we're marched off in handcuffs for it afterwards. Oh, Sidney, what a situation! Us going off on the quiet, and pretending we're going to a *matinée*, and then *this*! Isn't it like that play your mother saw a year ago, and was so shocked at that she's talked about it continually ever since?'

'Don't!' said Sidney, thirstily consuming soda-water. 'No, I can't eat!'

'Just as you please, but you'll only get nervier and nervier if you don't. I'm going to steady *my* nerves as much as possible. Oh for a cup of good hot strong coffee! I'm tired with making all that noise!' She yawned suddenly, and Sidney's alarm received a fresh addition.

'For Heaven's sake,' he said sharply, 'don't go to sleep.'

'No,' assented Berry, buttering a biscuit, 'it would be even worse if we fell asleep and were caught reposing. Only, suppose nobody comes to this flat for three months . . .'

'The Agent will be sending more people to view it, and they'd get us rescued, even if the fat . . . brute . . . was old Mother Rich, and has done a bunk with all the plate.'

'Even so,' said Berry, who seemed to derive mysterious comfort from facing the worst, 'whatever happens, we'll be hauled up as witnesses. We'll have to give evidence, and there won't be, as far as I can see, any chance of keeping this adventure dark. Sidney, I'm frightfully sorry! Flat-hunting together was my suggestion, and it's landed you in all this!'

'It's worse for you!' replied Sidney gruffly. 'It's rotten for you.' He lapsed into silence. Berry left the table and subsided into an easy chair.

'Oh, Sidney!' she implored, 'please *talk*! Keep on talking about *anything*, or I'll go to sleep. And then you will. And then someone'll come home here and find us!'

'I was thinking,' said Sidney. 'Suppose we shout together and hammer every ten minutes or so and talk or rest in between, and keep it up all night, then we *can't* sleep.'

'A hellish notion, but sound,' answered Beryl. 'But do eat something first. You're looking wan. I've never seen you look wan before. You're quite ghostly. Never mind, my lamb. You shan't be forced to marry me!'

Sidney set down his empty glass and wandered wearily about.

'D'you know, Berry,' he said, 'I'm afraid that this beastly episode has spoilt what I meant to say to you on our way home to-night. If I say it now you'll only think that I'm trying to save your reputation.'

'What were you going to say?' asked the girl slowly.

'I was seriously going to ask you whether you really meant what you said about it's being too much like marrying a . . . stodgy cousin . . . if you took me. I was thinking that perhaps if, after all, we got spliced and shared a cheap flat in Town until we could afford a better it wouldn't be quite the same as living at Sparrowfield. I mean, I've tried to imagine getting through life without your company, and it seemed so beastly bleak that I thought I'd ask you after all.'

Berry laid a half-eaten biscuit on the arm of her chair, whence it fell, butter side down, on to the carpet.

'You're a cool hand!' she said. 'You've got the convenient male notion that as soon as you find out life's a bit bleak you can pick me up like an extra blanket just to keep you warm! You're frightfully crass, Sidney! And you're about as capable of really falling in love with anyone as one of your rotten cylinders!'

'I shouldn't think,' he remarked, 'that you're a particularly loving sort yourself. You're too calculating about highbrows and lowbrows, and all that stuff.'

'And what about you, last Saturday, trying to spare my feminine feelings with your darned common sense; under the impression, I suppose, that I'd crawl to your feet and die of grief when I found that you didn't love me!'

'But I never said I didn't. I only said that I didn't think you'd be happy, married to me in Sparrowfield. And you said as much yourself.'

'I beg your pardon. I said Sparrowfield or *anywhere*, Sidney. Didn't you grasp my statement?'

Sidney roamed back to the supper things and drank more soda-water.

'Oh,' he said. 'Then I suppose that's settled.'

Again silence fell. Berry broke it by asking in gentle tones whether he had seen the box of chocolates mentioned by the lady in ear-rings. Sidney ignored the question, and swirled soda-water slowly round and round in his glass, staring downwards at the bubbles.

'I'm sorry,' he said. 'I've a lot to apologise for. But honest, I've never thought of you as a blanket, Berry.'

'You haven't properly thought of me at all,' said the girl resentfully, 'except just in relation to yourself. You're exactly like your father and grandfather in spite of imagining yourself modern. You think that women exist solely for personal relationships. You're still horribly jarred if we like *things* and any kind of work merely for itself. You'll talk about making a car to me for hours and expect me to be interested because it interests you, not because I'd find it interesting in any case. But you've never bothered to find how interesting *my* work is, indexing and hunting up references and things for the Office. You think that's just marking time for me until I can marry somebody and give it up without a pang. I want to be loved intelligently by someone who understands; or else not loved at all, but let alone to be interested in the things I like.'

Sidney set down his glass again and looked at her.

'It really seems to me, Berry,' he said, 'that we want the same thing! That's funny, isn't it?'

'Why funny? Aren't I as important in the world as you are?'

'Quite, of course, and I daresay a lot more important. I dunno how these things get sized up in the long run. Only what I mean to say is, if we both want the same thing, what's really wrong with getting married after all? Couldn't something be done about it?'

She looked back at him defiantly.

'What are you prepared to do about it, Sidney?' she asked. 'Change your spots?'

'Take a flat, marry you if you'll think better of what you said about having me, and let you keep on indexing books, if you want to, while I'm at the Works. And swap ideas in the evening and go about a bit. Get outside ourselves.'

'I wish you'd talked that way last Saturday!' she said with some asperity.

'I know,' he said, with restrained humility. 'I talked like a bounder. You know, I was kind of paralysed with fear after suddenly noticing what most people of our class seem to come to when they splice themselves and settle down. You always seemed to me quite satisfied with that kind of prospect. Why didn't you ever let me know the truth about you? We've been pals all these years and missed a plain thing like that!'

'Simply because you never took in half the things I've said to you in the course of our numerous conversations,' retorted Beryl. 'In consequence I couldn't help believing that you were just like your father all over again. He's a nice old boy, and I don't suppose he's ever noticed how he snubs your mother when she begins to talk intelligently. She was a very intelligent woman once upon a time, Sidney, but she developed a habit of mental discouragement young. I expect she had to or run away. I was afraid you'd try the same process on me, once we were fairly tied up. You've kept on getting more and more like your dad in looks and ways and, I couldn't help feeling, in *mind*. It's upset me dreadfully, you were such a nice original boy when you were at School. And the last few years the more I've seen of you the more I've lost you, somehow!'

He took a seat facing her and leant towards her urgently.

'Good Lord!' he said. 'You've been thinking all that! My word, Berry, do you know you're simply my salvation?'

'And what about mine?' she flung back. 'I want it just as much as you do! Can't you think of that for a change?'

'But I am,' he protested. 'Berry, do listen! I was scared of you because you've changed definitely into being a woman from being just a dear kid. I fancied that we'd get caught.'

'I know! By sex attraction and all that. And then everything'd be flat afterwards. A good thing spoilt. Oh, don't I know! I've watched it happening all around me. Bodies upsetting minds and minds growing tired of bodies. Conflicts, kids, and then a kind of subsiding into tolerance! It's seemed awful to me, Sidney. I wanted something better to make my life-work out of, if I had to give up other work. Things aren't equal between married men

and women. You'll always have your work. I don't despise a domestic career; it isn't that; only don't cage me inside it like your father's done to your mother!'

'Then you'll risk it with me?'

'I will if you will.' She jumped up. 'We can't begin kissing each other yet!' she said breathlessly. 'Not till we're out of this awful place and things are . . . normal. It's past eleven o'clock. Hadn't we better do some more shouting?'

When yet once again the tumult and the shouting died the imprisoned pair sat down simultaneously upon the sofa.

'I wonder what Minky's thinking about us never turning up there?' said Beryl. 'When she's rung up, if anybody finds us, to help vouch for our good character, she'll simply crow with joy about all this!'

'So,' said Sidney, 'will your people, I don't think!'

'I don't care,' said Berry. 'I'm too frightfully tired to care about anything. I'd almost give my soul for a cup of strong hot black coffee. Let's pull all the drawers out of the sideboard again. There might be a bit of wire or something right at the back.' She rose and dragged open a baize-lined drawer to its fullest extent exploring the cavity behind it with careful groping. 'Sidney!' she cried, and drew from some hidden depth—a key.

'Hullo!' He was beside her in a stride. 'I say, this looks better! It doesn't appear to be made for this lock, but still we might wangle it.' He knelt feverishly by the keyhole in the door. 'Stand out of the light, old thing, and don't breathe down the back of my neck!'

Berry roamed away to the farther end of the room.

'I won't watch you,' she said. 'It won't work if I do; I know it won't.' She stopped and stared blankly at a small plaster Pan on the top of a book-case. 'I'd like to smash you,' she said vindictively, 'grinning at me like that!'

'Eh!' said Sidney, looking round from his task.

'Not you. This silly thing. Oh, do get on with the job, and never mind me! I'm dotty!'

He worked for some minutes in attentive silence. Unobserved Beryl leant her forehead against the cool glass front of the book-case and waited tensely, while a delicate skeleton clock on the mantelpiece chimed twelve with silvery derision.

'Done it!' The words exploded on the strained silence like a bomb, and the girl jumped.

'No!' she cried. 'Oh, Sidney! Oh, we can get out . . . and go straight home in the car and no one'll know! Oh, my dear, I'm so relieved, only I'll marry you just the same! Let's get away. . . .'

'No luck!' said Sidney with brief bitterness. He had flung open the door, but simultaneously a latchkey turned in the outer portal and the passage became flooded with pink light. A tall lean lady in evening dress, accompanied by a little gentleman most obviously her husband, stared amazedly at the young man and the girl and the disordered supper table.

'Who on earth are *you*?' demanded the tall lady, and then with a glance at the sideboard, 'The silver!' she shrieked. 'All Sophia's silver! Ring up the police, *at once*, Philip!'

With a vigorous push she hurled the emerging explanatory Sidney back into the room whence he was coming and slammed to the door. A bolt shot into place and the inner key became useless. At the telephone on a narrow ledge in the passage 'Philip' bellowed excitedly for the police.

Matters wouldn't have looked so bad if the locked leather bag in the living-room had not been alien to the flat and hadn't proved to contain salt-cellars, spoons and a Queen Anne sugar-basin; and if, moreover, a key which fitted its small lock had not been found on Sidney's person. It belonged to a box at home, but that had to be proved, and as things were only a night of frenzied telephoning and the summoning to the police-station, and later to the police-court, of two sets of parents, a lawyer, Minky Marvel and several friends, served to satisfy Mrs. and Mr. Rich and the authorities of the identity and innocence of Sidney Pratt and Berry Burke. Fortunately Berry's accurate eye-memory of the stout lady and the big suit-case with the torn steamer-label materially assisted in the subsequent capture of one known to Scotland Yard as Rosie Pearl, and her male companion; and of course the daily papers found matter in the case to interest their readers.

To the clamorous enquiries of reporters and Sparrowfield alike, Sidney and Beryl presented the firmness of a permanently united battle-front.

'Yes,' they said singly and together, 'when we are married, quite soon, we're going to live in Town. We decided that long ago. And *that's* how we came to be looking for a flat.'

HOURS IN UNDRRESS.

VIII. HISTORY AND POLITICS.

IN 1883, when the rate of income-tax was 6½d. in the £, the Regius Professor of Modern History at Cambridge published a book on *The Expansion of England*. It was robust, purposive, tendentious, and, in the best sense, pragmatic. For Seeley's creed, as he said in his opening sentence, was that 'History, while it should be scientific in its method, should pursue a practical object,' and he pursued it with unflinching zest. Sir George Prothero, commemorating him in the *Dictionary of National Biography*, remarked that he employed Clio to solve political problems, and that 'he adopted, though he did not formulate, the view that "history is past politics, and politics present history."'

Others have formulated it before and since. In a pamphlet of 1681, recently rescued from oblivion by Mr. G. N. Clark,¹ a certain Henry Nevile declared: 'Whoever sets himself to study Politics must do so by reading History'; and Sir John Marriott, historian and politician, displays himself in his recent book² as a true disciple of Nevile and Seeley. Returning after many days to his earlier studies in the seventeenth century, he is now moved by the reflection that its problems have 'unexpectedly re-emerged. They are still,' he says, 'living issues; they still stir the blood of those who mingle in public affairs,' as has been his own experience as M.P. successively for the fighting cities of Oxford and York; and he states his particular problem, which history is to help to solve, in language that vies with Lord Hewart's in its care for the rights of Parliament:

'The final result of the prolonged conflict of the seventeenth century was to confide the key of the position to Parliament. Parliament still retains it. If, however, Parliament should neglect to use it, the battle will have to be fought afresh, under the same flag, on the same field' (p. 18).

¹ *The Seventeenth Century*, Oxford, 1929; p. 216.

² *The Crisis of English Liberty: A History of the Stuart Monarchy and the Puritan Revolution*, Oxford, 1930.

A grim prospect, gravely stated ; and Sir John does not hesitate to add :

‘ Our fathers fought against Princes ; we have to fight against the Powers which lurk in the darkness of Whitehall and still cover themselves under the Prerogative of the Crown. Recent tendencies have thus invested the tendencies of the seventeenth century with a new and arresting significance.’

The argument is sustained through nearly five hundred fluent pages, which illuminate a thrice-told tale out of the resources of a well-stored mind. The central problem of constructive statesmanship in the seventeenth century is defined (p. 168) as ‘ how to reconcile strength with freedom in the machinery of Government ’ ; and, in the epilogue on page 461 we are warned : ‘ Parliament has been tardy in adapting its procedure and machinery to the altered conditions of the twentieth century,’ with the consequence that ‘ legislation is passing from Westminster to Whitehall. The work of local administration is increasingly committed to increasingly efficient clerks, secretaries and directors.’

The diagnosis is accurate and will impress everyone who has experience (and who has not ?) of the industrious efficiency of the clerks. Yet it is legitimate to wonder if the conclusion is equally correct. It is not in the least with a view to minimising the evil of bureaucracy, or to deprecating the energy of its opponents, as guardians of our political freedom, that we venture to hint a doubt if the ‘ altered conditions of the twentieth century ’ have not altered it out of a direct likeness—a direct historical analogy—to the conditions of the seventeenth. For, though every argument is welcome which can be used to pull down the secretaries, yet a stage may be reached at which an intensive study of present politics will bring myopia to the historian. He will see history repeating itself in places where it is only repeating historians’ words—such a word as ‘ machinery,’ for example, in the sentences cited above from pages 168 and 461 of Sir John Marriott’s new book ; and the fight against princes in the seventeenth century for the control of the levers of government is not quite the same thing, except by a convention of nomenclature, as the fight in which we are (or should be) now engaged to prevent the machine getting out of control. It is not really a fight ‘ under the same flag,’ it is certainly not a fight ‘ on the same field.’

It is worth recalling in this context that political thought in

the seventeenth century never contemplated democratic institutions. Without adducing the evidence, and keeping Europe as a whole rather than England separately in view, we may state the conclusion in the temperate language of Mr. Clark¹:

'The machinery of government was still, in monarchies, the king's . . . Democratic ideas in the modern sense play a very small part in the seventeenth century. Few men seriously proposed to extend any sort of franchise to artisans or labourers, and no such proposal had any more influence on events than to create a temporary disturbance. The ease with which Oliver Cromwell put down the levellers and the failure of the peasants' rising in Switzerland about the same time are typical of the period.'

And, again, in a later chapter:

'It would be misleading to call these theories democratic since only a few extremists thought of all men whatsoever as the members of the state. Some such extremists there were, and, as in revolutionary periods everything is questioned and everything suggested, there were even some who put forward the idea of women's franchise; but for the overwhelming majority of the liberal thinkers of the seventeenth century citizenship was to be limited to a narrow class, usually a propertied class, but sometimes the class of the godly.'

These tranquil passages remind us, that, while the student of politics should read history, the student of history should not immerse himself too deeply in current politics. Sir John Marriott 'frankly' confesses that his book 'has been written from the angle of our own day, and with special reference to problems now insistently confronting us.' It is not the less readable on account of this preoccupation, and the case against the bureaucrats is not less serious because there were no democrats in the age of Louis XIV. But we must not be misled into a confusion of *this* freedom with *that*, nor must we forget that 1789, with its sequel of darkness and light, was interposed between the seventeenth and twentieth centuries. It is true that the revolution of that year was at first not a formidable sound in the ears of English liberal thinkers who remembered 1688; but here, again, as in the instance of 'machinery' above, it was a question of names. There were revolutions *and* revolutions, and the French style was swiftly discovered not to be modelled on the English.

¹ Op. cit., pp. 84-5, 224.

How the English democracy of to-day is to overtake the machinery which it has set at work, and bring it into effective control, which is really Sir John Marriott's problem, is less likely than he believes to be answered out of the history of the Stuart Monarchy and the Puritan Revolution. At least (for no help should be rejected, and it is not well to speak dogmatically), it seems a matter less for pragmatism than for idealism. For there is one lesson of the seventeenth century which may appeal to readers in an hour of undress as more fruitful of good hope than all the historical parallels marshalled so skilfully by Sir John. We state it in Mr. Clark's language, on page 318 of his monograph. The religion of the period, he says, had lost contact with the great world of action and thought :

'There was little mutual intellectual fertilisation between scientists or philosophers and theologians. Theology contributed nothing to the scientific revival . . . On the one hand the new intellectual outlook of the educated classes, and on the other the simple piety of the uneducated, owed little to the official leaders of the faith.'

Under such conditions, true freedom is impossible, whatever safeguards of political liberty may be devised for the ruling classes, and it is arguable at least that it is better to be masters of our intellectual heritage, though inhabiting an over-mechanised State, than to control all the levers of government and still to worship idols. There is interposed between 1688 and the present day not only 1789, but likewise 1859, the year of *The Origin of Species*, with its intellectual revolution reinforcing the ideas of the democrats ; and, if we do not follow Sir Arthur Keith in all his inferences from that advent, we readily accept his conclusion, stated at the British Association in 1927, that 'it was one of the marvels of the nineteenth century,' which went 'to initiate a new period in human thought—the Darwinian period—in which we still are.'

The Darwinian period. Seeley died in 1895, shortly after his appointment as K.C.M.G., which fitly marked his contribution to the development of Chamberlain's Empire policy. He had lived to see 'the expansion of England,' but his successors in the Cambridge chair, Acton, Bury, and Dr. Trevelyan, who were to see the Third Boer War, moved and are still moving away from the pragmatic method in reading history. Perhaps the rise from 6½d. to 4s. 6d. in the income-tax rate, with the disappointments that it

registers, has accelerated as well as accompanied the change, and has helped to substitute the idea of evolution for that of expansion—a Darwinian for a political idea. 'Of the future,' writes Professor Trevelyan in the concluding words of his famous short *History*, 'the historian can see no more than others.' Instead of 'the history of the past of England,' giving rise, as Seeley stipulated, 'to a prophecy concerning her future,' the historian, according to Dr. Trevelyan, 'can only point like a showman to the things of the past, with their manifold and mysterious message'; and, now, at the end of the road from pragmatism to Darwinism, with its milestones of taxation, we reach a new book¹ by Dr. James A. Williamson, which we may call, by the evidence of the title-page, a Darwinian version of English history. There is no policy in this book. 'I can claim, for the best of reasons,' says the author at the close of his preface, 'that party allegiance has not affected my version of the modern tendencies of English history.' Nor has he aimed at writing a text-book. His volume

'omits many things with which a text-book of its size would be obliged to deal. Instead, it selects those transactions which best illuminate the central theme, the development of the English community and of the country it inhabits.'

To select the facts and to comment on them is, in an enterprise of this kind, a high privilege and responsibility; and Dr. Williamson fulfils it discreetly. 'Prophecy,' he says with Dr. Trevelyan and against Sir John Seeley, 'is not the business of the historian'; and he closes more permissibly with a question, 'which will only be answered as the years unroll. Democracy has fulfilled many of the pledges. Can it continue to honour them and hold what it has won?'

The insatiable curiosity of politicians may try to anticipate the answer. If so, we would direct them to certain passages in this survey of national development, in which a key to the answer may be contained. First of all, they should read a closing paragraph, in which Dr. Williamson reduces the scale of personal achievement to a kind of evolutionary level. 'Political leaders,' he writes, 'have tended to become less the authors than the executors of policy.' And, again: '*It has become a matter of course* [our italics] that Parliament should annually enact some extension of these

¹ *The Evolution of England: A Commentary on the Facts*, Oxford, 1931.

(social-reform) activities.' This inevitableness of legislation, while it tends to merge all parties in one, tends at the same time to reduce the eminence of individual statesmen. Dr. Williamson contrasts the outstandingness of Gladstone and Disraeli in their own generation and the next with the diminishing stature of Balfour and Campbell-Bannerman. The Lloyd George ministry, he says, may be remembered as a product of the war, but 'in twenty years' time it is likely that as few will have any impression of those of Asquith or Baldwin.' Here is a salutary reminder, not so much of the fleetingness of human fame, or of the shortness of human gratitude, as of the automatic operation of the machine. It goes on turning out laws, whoever may hold the handle. Neither death, resignation, nor change of Government stops it or deflects its course; and, while this may mean that democracy is more surely in control, it means, too, that 'there is a loss of the inspiration that the people derived from the personalities of the nineteenth century.' It follows, perhaps, that the personalities are less durable. They come and go on the political stage. Mr. Lloyd George took his colleagues from various avocations. Lord Birkenhead, when he died, was in 'the City.'

The seven words which we have italicised in the above paragraph contain a clue to the change from expansion to evolution. In an examination-paper which I once had to answer in Seeley's *Expansion of England*, the question occurred: 'Who, in the opinion of Professor Seeley, were the great legislators, who the "Increasers" of the Anglo-Indian Empire, and what, as briefly described by him, were their several achievements?' We shall not ask such questions in the future. We shall ask about impersonal forces, about the outcome of events, which make laws, but do not train character. Our habit of thinking in millions, and of suspending judgment by relativity, may make more tolerant laws, but it will not train better character; and up and down the temperate pages of Dr. Williamson's book we find evidences to this conclusion. For instance, about Puritans in the reign of King Charles I:

'We moderns, in like circumstances, should not display a tithe of the discipline and self-restraint required in those days from fully half the thinking population of England. It made them men, but not pleasant men, nor fit denizens of merry England.'

And about Nonconformists in the reign of Charles II:

'Exclusion from public office and the learned professions, imprisonment for holding dissenting services, constant harrying by Anglican magistrates, became the lot of the nonconformists. . . . "The nonconformist conscience" is a phrase often used as a gibe to the present day; but the Cavalier High Churchman was largely to blame for the unpleasant outlook of the ranters he derided. At least the nonconformists proved steady, obstinate Englishmen and took their gruel unflinchingly. They really suffered more than did the Puritan gentry under Charles I.'

There is such a lot of leeway to make up. History may be called the great reconciler. 'The England, and indeed the Europe of the eighteenth century,' says Dr. Williamson, 'had little conception that change in the conditions of life is an inevitable accompaniment of life itself.' It is at once a profound truism, and a merciful dispensation, and it is not contradicted by the fact that the two best-sellers, outside fiction, since Burke's *Reflections on the French Revolution*, have been Paine's *Rights of Man* and Darwin's *Origin of Species*. Out of the one, says our author,

'for the first time a large section of the poorer class became interested in politics. In the older England they had been content for the rich to represent them. They now suspected that the rich were misrepresenting them. Radicalism was born.'

And out of the other it has come about

'that the majority of Englishmen to-day, whilst they may be essentially religious, are not active members of any organised religion. That is one of the matters in which we differ profoundly from our forefathers.'

Mrs. Meynell, whose reticent strength was referred to in our last 'hour in undress,' reflects, in her 'Builders of Ruins,' on the changes wrought by time in the handiwork of men:

'We speak in unknown tongues, the years
Interpret everything aright,
And crown with weeds our pride of towers,
And warm our marble through with sun,
And break our pavements through with flowers,
With an Amen when all is done,
Knowing these perfect things of ours.'

Politicians might ponder these verses, when they read in Dr. Williamson's narrative how 'the men of Runnymede had built more greatly than they knew, and had established principles that

were to be applied in ways they little dreamed of,' and how the Reform Act of 1832 was still 'no victory for democracy.' There were six hundred years between the two, when King William IV, like King John, signified his consent to 'a revolution peacefully achieved by the natural leaders of the nation.' But the end was not yet. History was not repeating itself, as it is sometimes and wrongly said to do. It was repeating the signs of its development. The pace quickened in the succeeding hundred years, and has become terrific since the Great War. Still, remembering what the six centuries had left undone, can we say that it has been too swift? Nature, by earthquake and flood, sometimes hastens the Amen, and the war, we are reminded, 'was not made by the men of 1914; it was made by the whole "century of hope" that had gone before.'

Before turning to the tale of that century, which contains this lesson in evolution, we would first, since we have mentioned war, cite three dicta by Dr. Williamson, each of which is striking in its context and possesses some present interest. Of the close of the Napoleonic campaign, he writes:

'The rift in English life had widened, and misery had increased. The war had been blamed for all, and with peace men expected a new and happier time. They did not get it. They had yet to learn that, apart from the bloodshed, the worst part of a long war is the peace that ends it.'

Of 1853 he writes:

'As the decades passed the miseries of war grew fainter and its romance shone brighter. The Duke of Wellington, intensely unpopular in 1830, had become a demi-god by 1850. It was not he that had changed but the public taste; he was ever indifferent to jeers and cheers alike. It was an effect of the long peace, an effect which shows signs of repeating itself in the years now before us.'

And, lastly, of our three Continental wars:

'Could England have survived [he asks] if she had left Louis to conquer Europe? It is an undecided question. The same problem has arisen again, in the time of Napoleon, and in the Great War of 1914. Indeed, it exists at this moment, for by the Pact of Locarno we are bound to intervene in a future Franco-German war. On every occasion the answer of our ruling statesmen has been the same, that we must fight on the Continent to preserve our liberty at home; but it is well to remember that on

every occasion also there have been sound patriots who have doubted the necessity.'

Coming back from these views on war and peace to the evolution of England in the nineteenth century, it is notable that a section of this book is entitled 'The Factories and the Fields.' The title is appropriate, but, remembering Mrs. Meynell's irony, we might change it to 'these perfect things of ours': so halting, unenlightened and inadequate was British policy in industry and agriculture. Take the fields, for example. Builders of ruins surely we were, when our land-owning legislators passed the Corn Law of 1815, and, having starved the countryman to desperation, passed the Game Law of the following year, by which, if he were found in possession of so much as a net for rabbits, he might be transported for seven years. 'Such laws,' says our author, 'manufactured criminals,' and of the sporting landlord's protective devices he adds: 'We know such things in our day as the horrors of modern war. For twelve years after Waterloo they were the legalised horrors of peace.'

So much in this place of the fields. What of the factories? About a hundred and fifty years ago, though 'strange new industries were growing up,' the meaning and the end of them were not for everyone to read. They went

'unseen by the great, static English world. The blast-furnaces might pollute the verdure of the surrounding fields, the owner of the cotton-mill might keep under lock and key the child-slaves which he obtained from the so-called guardians of the poor, villainous new slums might spring up like fungus round the manufacturing works; but it was all very remote from the consciousness of those who ruled England.'

Indeed, though the very name 'manufacturer' was rapidly changing its significance, and capital was creating a new industrialism, these rulers of England were slow to learn. Nor did the war-mind which they had acquired during the French campaign help later to quicken their intelligence.

'They had won victory by hardening their hearts, and they would not soften them now. They who had looked Napoleon in the face could not truckle to rioters and Radicals.'¹

¹ Professor Coupland, in his *Wilberforce* (Oxford, 1923, p. 410) bears like evidence in almost the same words: 'Nerves had been hardened since the days of the Terror. An English mob was scarcely as terrifying as Napoleon at Boulogne.' 'Tragic patriots' he calls the Tories of that epoch.

Still, Radicals had their way at last. It might be that 'in one sense the Factory Acts were the squire's retaliation for the attack on the Corn Laws,' but at last they were put in force, and there ensued a golden age, or at least an age of gold, in which it might seem 'that democracy and the earthly paradise had been inaugurated together.' But there was an *inferno* as well as a *paradiso*. Tom Paine and Francis Place might have been content, but there were new Radicals in the new time, who declared that the problem of poverty must not be left to solve itself, that the submerged tenth must be lifted out, and that the unfortunate and the shiftless must be rescued by the fortunate and the fit.

'Hence arose the modern programme of reform. It is best described as "social reform," in contrast with the political reforms of the earlier period. The programme was launched in an age of prosperity, when it seemed that the community could well afford it. It was a mighty innovation in the methods of civilisation. . . . After thirty years they do not claim to have completed it, neither have they proved that their work when done can permanently stand. This is the design underlying the political work of all parties in England since the twentieth century set in.'

And there, since all parties are involved, history parts company from politics, save to note that, after the English fashion, 'the new grew out of the old without any violent break,' and that, when statesmen combined to kill *laissez-faire*, they had once more found a way round revolution.

We have quoted enough to display the merits of Dr. Williamson's book. Some may deem its colours too neutral. But Macaulay's 'over-confident, lucid mentality,' which, in Dr. Trevelyan's phrase, 'always saw things in black and white, but never in grey,' is no longer suited to the historian. The grey tint is reflected in these pages from the thought of the age, which, though sometimes self-contradictory, is not therefore false or insincere. For

'the modern world needs to find the mean between the statesmanship of eighteenth-century despots, which was so clear-sighted that it was short-sighted, and the rhetoric of democratic leaders, who find it easy and popular to overlook awkward facts and paint instead impressionist pictures of glittering visions.'

The rest is written in the newspapers, and haply some of their proprietors will learn English history from Dr. Williamson.

LAURIE MAGNUS.

LITERARY ACROSTICS.

A LITERARY Acrostic is published every month, and the Editor of THE CORNHILL MAGAZINE offers two prizes to the most successful solvers. The winners will be entitled to choose books to the value of £1 from Mr. Murray's catalogue. If several solvers send solutions of equal merit, the two whose answers are opened first will win the prizes.

DOUBLE ACROSTIC No. 93.

'Wherever sorrow is, —— would be.'
 'The kinder we, to give them —— for nothing.'
 'For this —— much ——; 'tis bitter cold,
 And I am sick at heart.'

1. 'He lay like a warrior taking his ——
 With his martial cloak around him.'
2. 'Dan Chaucer, well of —— undefyled,
 On Fames eternall beadroll worthie to be fyled.'
3. 'She's as headstrong as an allegory on the banks of Nile.'
4. 'Stone walls do not a prison make,
 Nor —— bars a cage.'
5. 'And may there be no sadness of farewell,
 When I ——.'
6. '—— rush in where Angels fear to tread.'

RULES.

1. Only one answer may be sent to each light.
2. Every correct light and upright will score one point.
3. With his answer every solver must send the coupon that is printed on page viii of 'Book Notes' in the preliminary pages of this issue; and he must be careful to give also his real name and address.
4. Solvers should not write either the quotations or the references on the same paper as their answers. It is not necessary, or even desirable, to send them at all.
5. Solvers who write a second letter, to correct a previous answer, must send the complete solution as they wish it, and not merely state the desired alteration.
6. Answers to Acrostic No. 93 should be addressed to the Acrostic Editor, THE CORNHILL MAGAZINE, 50 Albemarle Street, London, W.1, and must arrive not later than May 20. No answers will be opened before this date.

ANSWER TO No. 92.

1.	S	umme	R
2.	C	ucko	O
3.	E	xcel	S
4.	N	obl	E
5.	T	ove	S

PROEM: Moore, *Irish Melodies*. Farewell! But whenever you welcome the hour.

LIGHTS:

1. Byron, *Don Juan*, iii, 86.
2. Wordsworth, *To the Cuckoo*.
3. Shakespeare, *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, iv, 2.
4. Tennyson, *Lady Clara Vere de Vere*.
5. Lewis Carroll, *Through the Looking-Glass*, ch. 1.

Acrostic No. 91 ('Service Anthems'): The prizes awarded to the two solvers whose answers are opened first and prove to be correct are gained by Mrs. Shearme, Upwood, Ryde, Isle of Wight, and Rev. J. Willcock, Lerwick, Shetland; these two winners will choose books to the value of £1 from Mr. Murray's catalogue.

Solvers will be doing a kind act if they will refrain from using metallic paper-fasteners of any kind.

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